FASCISM AND TRADITION

COLLECTION OF TRADITIONALIST CRITIQUES OF FASCIST MOVEMENTS AND REGIMES



JULIUS EVOLA

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by

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About This Collection

This collection contains most, if not all, of Evola's writings dealing with the topic of Fascist movements and regimes that arose in Europe in period from 1919 to 1945.

Books included are Fascism Viewed from the Right, Notes on the Third Reich and A Traditionalist Confronts Fascism.

FASCISM VIEWED FROM THE RIGHT

Foreword

By the early 1960s, Julius Evola (1899-1974) felt he had written his most important books, *Revolt Against the Modern World*,[1] *Men Among the Ruins*[2] and *Ride the Tiger*,[3] and composed *The Path of Cinnabar*[4] as a retrospective on his entire *oeuvre*. He decided to present his views on Italian Fascism, and later on, German National Socialism, the twentieth century political movements he knew best from personal experience. The first work was published in 1964 as *Fascism: Essay of a Critical Analysis from the Point of View of the Right*[5] and reprinted with additional notes in 1970 as *Fascism Viewed from the Right*.[6]

Evola had a variegated career. In his youth, he was the major Italian Dadaist poet and painter (1916-1922). He then became the leading Italian exponent of the intellectually rigorous esotericism of René Guénon (1886-1951). He enjoyed an international reputation for books on magic, alchemy and Eastern religious traditions, winning the respect of such important scholars as Mircea Eliade and Giuseppe Tucci. In his lifetime, only one of his many books, *The Doctrine of Awakening*, a 1943 interpretation of early Buddhism, was published in an English translation (1951).[7] In 1983, Inner Traditions International published *The Metaphysics of Sex* (1958),[8] which it reprinted as *Eros and the Mysteries of Love* in

[1] Rivolta contro il mondo moderno (Milan: Hoepli, 1934); translated as Revolt Against the Modern World (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1995).

[2] Gli uomini e le rovine (Rome: 1953), revised 1967); translated as Men Among the Ruins (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 2002).

[3] Cavalcare la tigre (Milan: All'Insegna del Pesce d'Oro, 1961); translated as Ride the Tiger (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2003).

[4] Il cammino del cinabro (Milan: All'Insegna del Pesce d'oro, 1963); translated as The Path of Cinnabar (London: Arktos Media, 2009).

[5] Il fascismo: saggio di una analisi critica dal punto di vista della destra (Rome: G. Volpe, 1964).

[6] Il fascismo visto dalla destra; Note sul terzo Reich (Rome: G. Volpe, 1974).

[7] La dottrina del risveglio (Bari: G. Laterza & figli, 1943), revised in 1965; translated as The Doctrine of Awakening (London: Luzac, 1951).

[8] Metafisica del sesso (Rome: Atanòr, 1958), revised 1968; translated as The Metaphysics of Sex (New York: Inner Traditions, 1983).

1992, the same year it published his 1949 book on Tantra, *The Yoga of Power*.[9] Since then, English translations of many of his books have been published.[10]

In Europe, Evola is known not only as an esotericist, but also as a brilliant and incisive Right-wing thinker. During the 1980s, his traditionalist and political books were translated into French.[11] His books and articles have been translated into German since the 1930s.[12] Discussion of Evola's politics reached North America more slowly. In the 1980s, the political scientists Thomas Sheehan, Franco Ferraresi and Richard Drake presented him unsympathetically, blaming him for neo-Fascist terrorism.[13] In 1990 the esoteric journal *Gnosis* published articles on Evola by Robin Waterfield and Italian esotericist Elémire Zolla.[14] The essay by *Gnosis* editor Jay Kinney is devoted to Evola's 'Fascism'. He seems not to have read Evola's books in any language, called *The Metaphysics of Sex* Evola's 'only book translated into English' and concluded that 'Evola's esotericism appears to be well outside of the main currents of Western tradition. It remains to be seen whether his Hermetic virtues can be disentangled from his political sins. Meanwhile, he serves as a persuasive argument for the separation of esoteric "Church and State"'.[15]

Evola was never a member of the Fascist Party, and during the two decades when Mussolini ruled Italy, Evola published critiques of several distinctive Fascist initiatives, including the Concordat with the Vatican, the violence of Fascist toughs (*gli squadristi*) and Fascist rapprochement with National Socialist views of race. His

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[9] Lo Yoga della potenza (Milan, 1949,) revised in 1968 (Rome: Edizioni mediterranee, 1968), new edition of L'Uomo come Potenza (Rome: Atanòr, 1926); translated as The Yoga of Power (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1992).

[10] The Path of Cinnabar, p. ix.

[11] Robin Waterfield, 'Baron Julius Evola and the Hermetic Tradition' in Gnosis 14 (1989-90), pp. 12-17.

[12] Karlheinz Weissman, 'Bibliographie' in Menschen immitten von Ruinen (Tübingen: Hohenrain-Verlag, 1991), pp. 403-406.

[13] Thomas Sheehan, 'Myth and Violence: The Fascism of Julius Evola and Alain de Benoist', in Social Research 48 (1981), pp. 45-73; Franco Ferraresi, 'Julius Evola: Tradition, Reaction and the Radical Right', in Archives européennes de sociologie 28 (1987), pp. 107-151; Richard Drake, 'Julius Evola and the Ideological Origins of the Radical Right in Contemporary Italy', in Peter H. Merkl (ed.), Political Violence and Terror: Motifs and Motivations (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 61-89; and Richard Drake, The Revolutionary Mystique and Terrorism in Contemporary Italy (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1989), pp. 114-134.

[14] Robin Waterfield, ibid.; Elémire Zolla, 'The Evolution of Julius Evola's Thought', Gnosis 14 (1989-90), pp. 18-20.

[15] Jay Kinney, 'Who's Afraid of the Bogeyman? The Phantasm of Esoteric Terrorism', in Gnosis 14 (1989-90), pp. 21-24.

opposition to the Concordat did not convince Mussolini, who was, however, sufficiently impressed by Evola's critique of 'scientific racism' to give his imprimatur to a German translation of one of his books on race, *Synthesis of the Doctrine of Race*.[16] Evola's criticism of the *squadristi* attracted their unwanted attention, until he received the protection of Roberto Farinacci, the Fascist boss of Cremona. He served as editor of the opinion page of Farinacci's newspaper, *Il Regime Fascista*, from 1934 until 1943. The physical harassment stopped, but at the start of the Second World War, when he attempted to resume his commission as an officer in the Italian army that he had received in the Great War, his refusal to fight a duel with a journalist was used as grounds to deny his request.[17]

Evola's originality lay in his thorough and consistent traditionalism, beginning with this book's witty title. Some Italians defended Fascism and all its works and ways from the March on Rome in October 1922 to Mussolini's resignation on 25 July 1943 — *il Ventennio*, or the 'Twenty Years'. Their motto was *Il Duce ha sempre ragione!* (The Duce is always right!). Others, committed Leftists and less committed compromisers, denied any virtue to Italy's government of that time. In *Fascism Viewed from the Right*, Evola points out the absurdity of both positions and proceeds to a critical analysis of Fascism on the basis of the principles he had expounded and advocated in *Revolt Against the Modern World* and other books and pamphlets. Evola is interested in Fascism's principles. He insists that human failings and historical accidents (what Evola refers to as 'the contingent') should not be held against men or movements unless they can be shown to be the consequences of mistaken principles.

Evola seeks the principles of Fascism in Mussolini's major speeches and initiatives, as well as the article on 'The Doctrine of Fascism' in the *Enciclopedia Italiana*. (This last was officially the work of Mussolini, but is usually attributed to the regime's major philosopher and educational reformer, Giovanni Gentile.)[18]

Evola finds that Fascism's principles were often good. The regime was sound in principle but failed during the crisis of the Second World War because Italians had been demoralised by two generations of liberal and radical propaganda since the uniting of Italy, *il Risorgimento*. (For the Left, the *Risorgimento* was the expulsion of foreign and papal rule from Italy by an aroused Italian people who were led by great republican radicals like Garibaldi and Mazzini. Conservatives thought that Victor

[16] Sintesi di dottrina della razza (Milan: Hoepli, 1941).

[17] H. T. Hansen, 'Preface to the American Edition' in Men Among the Ruins, p. xiii.

[18] A. James Gregor, Giovanni Gentile: Philosopher of Fascism (London: Transaction, 2001), pp. 2-3.

Emmanuel (Vittorio Emanuele), the King of Piedmont, and his politically astute advisor, Cavour, used Garibaldi and Mazzini to overthrow Italy's traditional regimes, which were replaced with Piedmont's bogus — because politically incoherent — constitutional monarchy.)[19]

Evola explains the principles of a true Right. A strong central state creates a nation and its people, not *vice versa*. At the moral and political centre of the best states is a king (*rex*), who may, however — and under Fascism did — choose a leader (*dux*) to administer the state. Strong central leadership does not subvert and, in fact, encourages subsidiarity or federalism, where most decisions and political activity occur at appropriate lower levels. Subsidiarity does not imply democracy, the kingdom or realm of quantity (René Guénon's *Règne de la Quantity*).[20] On the contrary, Fascism established a Chamber of Corporations where the estates, professions and vocations of the land were represented on the basis of importance and achievement, not of pure number.

In a traditional state, the economy is subordinate to the political. Mussolini denied that *homo oeconomicus* existed. Evola does not agree. Unfortunately, in some people the economic dominates the political, ethical and religious. This psychological condition is a mental illness, *la daimonia dell'economia* (demonic possession by the economy).[21] A healthy state is like a healthy human. Free men are unified and coherent individuals who are not dominated by the outside, physical world, but they are also differentiated, with a proper hierarchy of spirit, soul and body within. The state's economic policy should aim at autarchy, supplying its own needs and healthy desires, without depending on free trade with other countries or finance capitalism. Just as a healthy human avoids excessive or unhealthy eating and drinking and exercises appropriately, so a healthy nation privileges independence, cooperation and an almost military morale over a purely economic prosperity and consumerism, on the one hand, or a totally controlled centralised economic planning, on the other. Fascism had these goals and aimed at producing this kind of human being when the war cut short its initiatives before they could reach fruition. The courage and resolution of the Italians who supported the Italian Social Republic in northern Italy after 25 July 1943, although its principles were deficient, showed that Fascism was working, but was not given enough time to succeed.

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[19] Evola, Men Among the Ruins, pp. 187-189.

[20] René Guénon, Le règne de la quantité et les signes des temps (Paris: Gallimard, 1945); translated as The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times (Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001).

[21] See Men Among the Ruins, Chapter 6.

As in *The Path of Cinnabar*,[22] Evola devotes several pages to explaining his views on race in relationship to Fascism. Mussolini's strongest support for Evola came in relation to this subject, which became an issue after Italy's conquest of Ethiopia in 1936. Influenced by Nazi Germany, Italy passed racial laws in 1938. Evola was already writing on racial views consistent with a traditional vision of mankind and in opposition to what he saw as the biological reductionism and materialism of Nazi racial thought. His writings infuriated Guido Landra, editor of the journal *La Difesa della Razza* (Defence of the Race) and other scientific racists, especially Evola's article 'Scientific Racism's Mistake'.[23] Mussolini, however, praised Evola's 1935 essay on 'Race and Culture' and permitted Evola's *Synthesis of the Doctrine of Race* to be translated into German as *Compendium of Fascist Racial Doctrine* to represent the official Fascist position.[24]

Evola accepts the traditional division of man into body, soul and spirit, and argues that there are races of all three. 'While in a "pure blood" horse or cat the biological element constitutes the central one, and therefore racial considerations can be legitimately restricted to it, this is certainly not the case with man, or at least any man worthy of the name. […] Therefore racial treatment of man cannot stop only at a biological level.'[25] Just as the state creates people and nation, so the spirit shapes the races of body and soul. Evola wrote a history of racial thought from Classical Antiquity to the 1930s, *The Blood Myth*: *The Genesis of Racism*.[26] He argued that in addition to scientific racism as practiced by Count de Gobineau, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Alfred Rosenberg and Landra, there was a tradition that appreciated extra- or super-biological elements and whose adherents included Montaigne, Herder, Fichte, Gustave Le Bon and Evola's friend, Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss, a biologist at the University of Berlin.[27]

Evola's critique of the one-party state as still preserving the idea of a government of *partitocrazia*, rule by parties, echoes a common Italian complaint about parties being more important than the citizens they are supposed to represent. This critique

[22] The Path of Cinnabar, pp. 164-179.

[23] 'L'Equivoco del razzismo scientifico', Vita Italiana 30 (September 1942).

[24] 'Razza e cultura', in Rassegna Italiana (1935); Sintesi di dottrina della razza; Grundrisse der faschistischen Rassenlehre (Berlin: Edwin Runge Verlag, 1943).

[25] Sintesi di dottrina della razza, p. 35, note 10.

[26] Il mito del sangue: Genesi del razzismo (Milan: Hoepli, 1937), revised 1942.

[27] Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss, Rasse und Seele. Eine Einführung in den Sinn der leiblichen Gestalt (Munich, 1937); Rasse ist Gestalt (Munich, 1937).

has been influential. In Evola's day, the successor to the Fascist Party was called the Italian Social Movement (MSI), not a party. In Italy Leftists still use the word party. The Communist Party of Italy (CPI) has changed its name (twice) and now calls itself the Democratic Party (PD). (From 1993 until 2007, its name was the Democratic Party of the Left, PDS.) Right-wing organisations prefer names like National Alliance, League of the North and even one named after the soccer cheer, Forza Italia! On the other hand, the American poet Ezra Pound, who lived in Italy under Fascism, admired Fascism's one-party state and argued that America had prospered under one-party rule in the first forty years of the nineteenth century. 'Jefferson governed for twenty-four years in a *de facto* one-party condition. Quincy Adams did NOT represent a return to federalism and the one party (Jeffersonian) continued through the twelve years of Jackson-Van Buren.'[28]

Evola approved of the Fascist commitment to economic autarchy on principle, but there were practical consequences, which he may have viewed as 'contingent'. When Mussolini came to power in 1922, Italy had a rich cultural heritage, but financially and politically it was what we today call a 'third world country'. By the 1930s Italy had a European presence. Mussolini saw to the draining of the Pontine Marshes around Rome, which had been a source of malaria since antiquity. ('Italian marshes/ been waiting since Tiberius' time', Pound wrote in *Canto* 38.61.)[29] Farmers worked the recovered land and villages and small towns were constructed there. This and similar projects restored millions of acres of arable land. They were part of Mussolini's 'wars' for the lira, wheat, country life and population that aimed at giving Italy greater control over its destiny. The positive effects on national morale surpassed its economic success, which was not, however, insignificant. From 1925 to 1935, grain production grew significantly, and the importing of foreign grain dropped by 75 %. The crushing national debt was renegotiated from short-term to long-term loans. Servicing the domestic debt went from 28 billion lire a year to 6 billion. Evola is scornful of the population campaign, and it is easy to smile at some of its aspects. Military officers, for instance, were encouraged to greet pregnant women with the Fascist salute. On the other hand, encouraging soldiers and civilians to see themselves as part of a common national life is, perhaps, not ridiculous.[30]

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[28] Ezra Pound, Jefferson and/or Mussolini (Liverwright: London, 1933), p. 125

[29] The Cantos of Ezra Pound (New York: New Directions, 1970), p. 188-189.

[30] The facts in this and the next three paragraphs come from Nicholas Farrell, Mussolini: A New Life (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003), e.g., pp. 185-191, 232-235, and 248-251.

There were also public works projects in addition to the rural initiatives. In Rome, subways and new roads to the Coliseum and the Vatican were constructed to ease traffic congestion. (Rome's two subway lines built under Fascism are still the only active ones.) A large sports complex, the Foro Mussolini, was built for the 1940 Olympics (which was cancelled because of the war). It still houses the soccer stadium and the site of the Italian Tennis Open. The train system was electrified and train stations built in the major cities. Not only did 'the trains run on time', but their journey times were reduced significantly. (The travel time from Rome to Syracuse was cut in half.) Again the question of morale was as significant as the measurable results. The Italian people felt that things were happening in areas of their national life where nothing had been accomplished 'since Tiberius' time'.

There was also a cultural side to Fascism. By its restoration of the ancient Roman fasces, Fascism proclaimed Italy's ancient traditions. It sponsored archaeological projects to uncover the Roman past from the republican temples at Largo Argentina in Rome to excavations at Ostia and Libya. The great Ara Pacis of the Emperor Augustus was recovered from beneath the streets of downtown Rome and, following negotiations with the Vatican for parts preserved there, was restored and displayed near the Tiber, where it can still be seen.[31] But it was not only ancient art that Fascism encouraged. There was a national movie industry in Cinecittà outside Rome (which can be reached by the new Metro system). Writers and artists like Pirandello, D'Annunzio and Marinetti were honoured. Italy's great past was linked to a creative present and future.

Under Mussolini, Italy became a European power. In 1896, the army of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) soundly defeated the Italian army at the Battle of Adowa (Adwa). It was a fair fight between two equally underdeveloped countries. When Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1936, the world protested against the unequal forces confronting one another. This inequality had developed in the years since 1922. Earlier, in 1934, Mussolini had frustrated Hitler's first attempt to conquer Austria.

Evola may have considered these factors to be contingent, but they follow from principles of which he approved. He was less enthusiastic about what was generally considered Mussolini's most impressive domestic achievement, the Concordat between the Catholic Church and the government of Italy signed in 1929, which ended two generations of hostility between the Church and the Kingdom of Italy.

[31] E. Christian Kopff, 'Italian Fascism and the Roman Empire', in Classical Bulletin 76 (2000), pp. 109-115.

Evola believed that the transcendent was essential for a true revival, but he did not look to the Catholic Church for leadership. In *Men Among the Ruins*, when the official position of the Church was still strongly anti-Communist, he predicted that the Church would move to the Left, and he repeated his analysis in the second edition of 1967.

> [A]fter the times of De Maistre, Bonald, Donoso Cortés, and the *Syllabus* have passed, Catholicism has been characterized by political maneuvering […] Inevitably, the Church's sympathies must gravitate toward a democratic-liberal political system. Moreover, Catholicism had for a long time espoused the theory of "natural right," which hardly agrees with the positive and differentiated right on which a strong and hierarchical State can be built. […] Militant Catholics like Maritain had revived Bergson's formula according to which "democracy is essentially evangelical"; they tried to demonstrate that the democratic impulse in history appears as a temporal manifestation of the authentic Christian and Catholic spirit […] By now, the categorical condemnations of modernism and progressivism are a thing of the past. […] When today's Catholics reject the "medieval residues" of their tradition; when Vatican II and its implementations have pushed for debilitating forms of "bringing things up to date"; when popes uphold the United Nations (a ridiculous hybrid and illegitimate organization) practically as the prefiguration of a future Christian ecumene — this leaves no doubts as to the direction in which the Church is being dragged. All things considered, Catholicism's capability of providing adequate support for a revolutionary-conservative and traditionalist movement must be resolutely denied.[32]

His 1967 analysis mentions Vatican II, but Evola's position on the Catholic Church went back to the 1920s, when, after his early Dadaism, he was developing a philosophy based on the traditions of India, the Far East and ancient Rome under the

[32] Men Among the Ruins, pp. 210-211; Gli uomini e le rovine, pp. 15-151. 'A ridiculous hybrid and illegitimate organization' translates questa ridicola associazione ibrida e bastarda.

influence of Arturo Reghini (1878-1946).[33] Reghini introduced Evola to Guénon's ideas on Tradition and his own thinking on Roman 'pagan imperialism' as an alternative to the twentieth century's democratic ideals and plutocratic reality. Working with a leading Fascist ideologue, Giuseppe Bottai (1895-1959), Evola wrote a series of articles in Bottai's *Critica Fascista* in 1926-27, praising the Roman Empire as a synthesis of the sacred and the regal, an aristocratic and hierarchical system under a true leader. Evola rejected the Catholic Church as a source of religion and morality independent of the state, because he saw its universalistic claims as compatible with and tending toward liberal egalitarianism and humanitarianism, despite its anti-Communist rhetoric.

Evola's articles enjoyed a national *succès de scandale* and he expanded them into a book, *Imperialismo Pagano* (1928),[34] which provoked a heated debate involving many Fascists and Catholics, including Giovanni Battista Montini (1897-1978), who, when Evola published the second edition of *Men Among the Ruins* in 1967, had become the liberal Pope Paul VI. Meanwhile, Mussolini was negotiating with Pope Pius XI (1857-1939) for a reconciliation in which the Church would give its blessings to his regime in return for protection of its property and official recognition as the religion of Italy. Italy had been united by the Piedmontese conquest of Papal Rome in 1870 and the Popes had never recognised the new regime. So Evola wrote in 1928, 'Every Italian and every Fascist should remember that the King of Italy is still considered a usurper by the Vatican.'[35] The signing of the Lateran Accords on 11 February 1929, remedied that situation and ended the debate. Even Reghini and Bottai turned against Evola.[36]

Evola later regretted the tone of his polemic, but he also pointed out that the fact that this debate took place gave the lie direct to extreme assertions about the supposed lack of freedom of speech in Fascist Italy. Evola has been vindicated on the main point. The Catholic Church accepts liberal democracy and even defends it as the only legitimate regime. The University of Notre Dame is not the only Catholic university with a Jacques Maritain Center, but no Catholic university in America has a centre

[33] On Reghini, see The Path of Cinnabar, pp. 78-80. Elémire Zolla gives the essentials about Reghini's influence on Evola in his Gnosis essay (note 14, above).

[34] Imperialismo Pagano (Rome: Atanòr, 1928); translated as Heathen Imperialism (Kemper, France: Thompkins & Cariou, 2007).

[35] Imperialismo Pagano, p. 40.

[36] Richard Drake, 'Julius Evola, Radical Fascism, and the Lateran Accords', in Catholic Historical Review 74 (1988), pp. 319-403.

named after Joseph de Maistre, Louis de Bonald or Juan Donoso Cortés. Pope Pius IX was beatified for proclaiming the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, not for his *Syllabus Errorum*, which denounced the idea of coming to terms with liberalism and modern civilisation. Those who want to distance Evola from Fascism emphasise the debate over *Heathen Imperialism*.

There are anecdotes about Mussolini's fear of Evola, but the documentary evidence points in the opposite direction. Yvon de Begnac's talks with Mussolini, published in 1990, report Mussolini consistently speaking of Evola with respect. Il Duce had the following comments about the debate over *Heathen Imperialism*:

> Despite what is generally thought, I was not at all irritated by Doctor Julius Evola's pronouncements made a few months before the Conciliation on the modification of relations between the Holy See and Italy. Anyhow, Doctor Evola's attitude did not directly concern relations between Italy and the Holy See, but what seemed to him the long-term irreconcilability of the Roman tradition and the Catholic tradition. Since he identified Fascism with the Roman tradition, he had no choice but to reckon as its adversary any historical vision of a universalistic order.[37]

It is clear that Mussolini respected Evola and was interested in his ideas. When he was rescued by Otto Skorzeny in 1943 and brought to Hitler's military headquarters, known as the Wolf's Lair (*Wolfsschanze*), Evola was one of a select group of Italians to be invited there. (Evola's fluency in German may have been one factor in the decision.)

Evola's interest in and involvement in politics has often been a sticking point with religious traditionalists of all stripes. The true world and final goal of a fulfilled spiritual life is the metaphysical, spiritual world that lies beyond the physical, material world. Why was Evola, who was a master of spiritual doctrine, so interested in contemporary politics? For René Guénon, for instance, attaining spiritual fulfilment is a process of passive withdrawal from the chaos of the material world, to escape involvement in the modern world until its final collapse into chaos. Then, and only then, will there be a role for a new *brahmin* caste to restore a Golden Age on the basis of their knowledge of Tradition. Guénon and Evola agreed on many important issues. For Evola, however, active involvement in the world is a viable route to spiritual

[37] Yvon de Begnac, Taccuini Mussoliniani, Francesco Perfetti (ed.), (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1990), p. 647.

realisation.[38] The way of the warrior, that of the *kshatriya* caste, is not inferior to the *brahmin*'s. In the best traditional state, the king embodied the traits of both *brahmin* and *kshatriya*, priest and warrior. This much seems clear from Evola's exposition in *Revolt Against the Modern World* (1934), as well as his earlier *Essays on Magical Idealism* (1925).[39] The issue has been confused by the significant chronological difference between the publication of the first editions of *Men Among the Ruins* in 1953 and *Ride the Tiger* in 1961. As Evola's letters show, he wrote *Ride the Tiger* first, and meant them to be understood together. My own comparison of the relation of *Ride the Tiger* to *Men Among the Ruins* is that of Aristotle's *Ethics* to his *Politics*. For both authors, the two works do not contradict, but supplement one another.

Fascism Viewed from the Right is a model of a traditionalism that is not only spiritual and otherworldly, but permeates all aspects of life. Evola's traditionalism was active in meditation and initiation, but also in politics and mountain climbing. His vision of the past he had lived through was committed and principled, but also disinterested, in the original meaning of that word. Such a vision of the past may have been hard to appreciate when the book was first published, but more than two generations removed from the time of Fascism and Mussolini, it should not be too much to expect us to enter into Evola's spirit. We need not accept every judgment and may vigorously object to some. In the end, Evola's attempt to combine a disinterested commitment to principle with active involvement in the world provides a model of traditionalism that will remain valid.

[38] For a comparison and contrast of Evola and Guénon, see The Path of Cinnabar, pp. 7 and 103-104; and Paul Furlong, Social and Polilitical Thought of Julius Evola (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 27 and 41-45.

[39] Saggi sull'Idealismo màgico (Rome: Atanòr, 1925).

I

In the pages that will follow we propose to undertake an examination of Fascism from the point of view of the Right. This examination, however, will be limited to Fascism's general aspect and, basically, will take place on the level of principles. To achieve this it is necessary above all to indicate what we understand by Right, even if this task will not be easy, because it is not possible to furnish the general reader with reference points that have a direct relationship with contemporary reality, nor even with more recent Italian history, that is, the history of Italy since it was unified as a nation.

On the first point we must say that there does not exist in Italy today a Right worthy of this name, a Right as a unified political force that is organised and furnished with a precise doctrine. What is currently called the Right in political struggles is defined less by a positive content than by a generic opposition to the most extreme forms of subversion and social revolution that gravitate around Marxism and Communism. The Italian Right includes diverse and even contradictory tendencies. A significant sign of confused ideas and today's narrow horizons is established by the fact that in Italy today liberals and many other proponents of democracy can be considered as men of the Right, a situation that would have appalled representatives of a real traditional Right, because when such a Right existed, liberalism and democracy were notoriously and justly considered as currents of revolutionary subversion, more or less as radicalism, Marxism and Communism appear today in the eyes of the so-called parties of order.[1]

What is called the Right in today's Italy includes various monarchists, and especially those tendencies with a "nationalist" orientation that are committed to maintaining ideological ties with the preceding regime, that is, Fascism. What has so far been lacking in these tendencies is the necessary differentiation that could allow them to appear as representatives of an authentic Right. This belief is the result of thoughts we shall develop that are devoted to distinguishing the ideological contents of Fascism. Making these distinctions should have represented for this movement an essential theoretical and practical task, which instead has been overlooked.

[1] The British political theorist John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), in his essay 'On Liberty', wrote that any political system requires both 'parties of order', which represent tradition and conservatism, and 'parties of progress', which represent new ideas and liberalism.

Do we really need to point out the absurdity of identifying any kind of political Right with the economic Right? Marxist polemics notoriously and fraudulently aim at this identification. For Marxists there is no difference between the Right and the capitalist, or the conservative and 'reactionary' bourgeoisie, which is intent on defending its interests and privileges. In our political writings, we have never grown weary of denouncing this insidious confusion and the irresponsibility of those who, by favouring this confusion to some degree, offer arms to the enemy. *Between the true Right and the economic Right there is not only no common identity, but on the contrary, there is a clear antithesis*. This is one of the points that will be emphasised in the present pages, when we refer to the relations between politics and economy that Fascism tried to define and, what is more, derive from every true traditional doctrine of the state.

As for Italy's history, we have already said in reference to it that, unfortunately, there is very little that can be gathered for defining the true Right's point of view. In fact, as everybody knows, Italy was unified as a nation above all under the banner of ideologies that derive from the Revolution of the Third Estate[2] and from the 'immortal principles' of 1789.[3] These ideologies do not play simply an instrumental and secondary role in the movements of the *Risorgimento*,[4] but were transplanted and prospered in the united Italy of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This Italy has been very far from presenting the political structure of a new, strong and well-articulated state that entered as a latecomer among the great European monarchies.

This 'little Italy' was a land of parliamentary democracy and a domesticated monarchy, where subversive movements, by exploiting social distress and the consequences of an inept administration, succeeded in provoking agitations that were often violent and bloody. There did exist, it is true, the so-called 'historic Right', but it barely held itself upright and lacked the necessary courage to reach the roots of the

[2] In pre-Revolutionary France, the general assembly of the French government was divided into three States-General: the clergy (First), the nobles (Second), and the commoners (Third).

[3] The French Revolution, one of the slogans of which was 'liberty, equality, brotherhood'.

[4] The Risorgimento ('resurgence') is a name for the conquest and unification of the various states on the Italian peninsula by the House of Savoy, the rulers of Piedmont in northern Italy. It included Garibaldi's overthrow of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (1864) and culminated in Savoy's unprovoked invasion of the Papal States in 1870.

evils that it should have opposed, even if in the times of Di Rudinì[5] and Crispi[6] it was capable of demonstrating a certain resolute character in the face of those evils. At any rate, it was basically an expression of the bourgeoisie. Unlike the Right of other nations, it did not represent an aristocracy as a political class that represented an old tradition. The tiny vestige of piedmontese[7] aristocracy it had to offer in this sense almost completely evaporated when it passed from the kingdom of Piedmont to the Italian nation. More than in domestic politics and the elaboration of a general doctrine of the state, the historic Right achieved noteworthy success in the field of foreign politics, where its crowning accomplishment was setting up the Triple Alliance.[8] If it had developed in all its logical postulates, this fortunate connection could have removed Italy from the orbit of the ideologies of French and revolutionary origin and oriented her in the direction of those that were, in good measure, preserved in the traditional states of Central Europe. This development could have provoked a re-dimensioning of fundamental political ideas, but it completely misfired. Therefore the historic Right has left us no precise ideological legacy and developed into a moderate liberalism. When the Triple Alliance came to an end and Italy intervened in the First World War on the side of the Entente Cordiale[9] which defended, in addition to its material interests, the cause of democracy (despite the presence in the Entente of autocratic Russia, which was doomed to pay a tragic price for its guilty politics), Italy returned almost entirely to the direction that she had chosen during the *Risorgimento*, in close connection with the ideologies and

[5] Antonio Starabba, marchese di Rudinì (1839-1908) served twice as the Prime Minister of Italy during the 1890s. He was blamed by the conservatives for yielding too much to socialist radicals, which led to his dismissal from office. He ordered the violent repression of a strike in Milan in May 1898, which led to the Bava-Beccaris massacre in which many workers were killed and injured.

[6] Francesco Crispi (1819-1901) was a Sicilian politician who helped to establish Italian unification. He served twice as Prime Minister between 1887 and 1896. In 1894, he ordered the army to brutally crush an uprising of various liberal factions in Sicily, leading to a suppression of anarchists and socialists throughout the country.

[7] Piedmont is a region of northern Italy which initiated Italy's unification following its independence from the Austrian Empire. The House of Savoy, or the governing monarchy of Piedmont, became the monarchs of the Kingdom of Italy.

[8] The Triple Alliance, which was formed in 1882, consisted of Italy, Austria-Hungary and Germany, and acted as a counterweight against the Triple Entente of the United Kingdom, France and Russia. It lasted until 1914.

[9] The Entente Cordiale was a set of treaties signed by the United Kingdom and France in 1904 which laid the groundwork for the Triple Entente, which was created in 1907.

international revolutionary movements of 1848-1849.[10] In addition, the nationalist excuse for interventionism was doomed to be revealed as an illusion, if one considers only the political and social climate of 'victorious' Italy, where the anti-nationalist forces had, through their entire term, almost free rein and where no revolution or recovery from above, no constitution of a true Right in legal terms, took place before the arrival of Fascism. In such a climate, what was the possible significance of what Italy gained in terms of the partial territorial payment of irredentist claims?[11]

Our reference to the historic Italian Right that arose in a parliamentary regime leads us to a clarification. Strictly speaking, concerning what we have in view and which will constitute our reference point, the term 'Right' is inappropriate. In fact, it presupposes a duality. Practically speaking, the Right defines itself in the framework of the democratic parliamentary party regime in opposition to a 'Left', and therefore in a framework rather different from the traditional one of the preceding regimes. In such regimes it was possible to have, at most, a system of an English type in its original pre-Victorian form, that is, with a party that represents the government (which is, in a certain sense, the Right) and an opposition, which is understood, however, not as an ideological or principled opposition, nor as an opposition to the system. Rather, it is an opposition *within* the system (or structure) which has the function of rectifying or integrating criticism, without of course questioning the idea of the state, which is in a certain way transcendent and inviolable. Such a 'functional' opposition, severely limited in an organic and always loyalist context, has nothing to do with an opposition that can motivate one or another of the many parties, with each one depending on itself and aiming at the conquest of power and the state, if not at the founding of an anti-state, as was the case with the Republican Party[12] in the past and as is the case with today's Communist Party.

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[10] A series of revolutions based on liberal and socialist principles broke out in various European countries in 1848. The unrest lasted well into 1849.

[11] In April 1915, Italy secretly signed the Pact of London with the Triple Entente, agreeing to switch sides in the First World War in return for a promise that territories in other countries which were regarded as part of Italy, as well as parts of the German and Ottoman empires, would be awarded to it at the end of the war. Italy honored its agreement, but the Pact was nullified by the Treaty of Versailles, and Italy was not granted everything that had been promised in it.

[12] The Italian Republican Party was a liberal party which opposed the ascension of the House of Savoy over Italy in the 1860s. Once they established themselves as the monarchs of the nation, the Party responded by refusing to participate in the political process, although it continued to have an important role in affairs. The Party was banned by the Fascists in 1926.

This is the way it is necessary to conceive the Right taken in its best sense, that is as political and not economic, not as something linked to an already regressive phase, a phase marked by the advent of parliamentary democracy with the regime of many parties. In this phase, the Right presents itself factually as the antithesis of the various Lefts, almost in competition with them on the same level. In principle, however, the Right represents, or ought to represent, a higher demand. It ought to be the recipient and affirmer of values linked directly to the idea of the true state: values that are in a certain sense *central* and superior to every practical opposition, according to the superiority inherent in the very concept of authority or sovereignty taken in its fullest sense.

These hints are already leading to the definition of our reference point, through which it will be permitted to speak, in general, of the great European political tradition, not thinking of a particular regime as a model, but rather of some basic ideas that, in different but coherent ways, have been at the foundation of different states and have never been fundamentally questioned. By an amnesia that is too unusual to be considered natural and should be explained (in the best case scenario, that is, apart from the falsifications and misleading suggestions of a certain type of historiography) as the pathological effect of deep traumatic events, our contemporaries seem to have no longer a living and adequate idea of the world to which has been customarily applied the faded tag of 'old regime'. In this regard, we are evidently not looking at directive principles but at certain incarnations of those principles that are always subject to attrition, denaturing and wearing out, and which in any case have a certain more or less unrepeatable conditionality. But the contingence, and the lesser or greater longevity of similar forms, which naturally are, at a given moment, situated in the past, does not weigh and ought not to weigh against the validity of the principles. This is the touchstone for every examination that aims at collecting the essential and avoids becoming the subject of a *historicist* confusion.

We can therefore bring these preliminary considerations to a close by saying that, ideally, the concept of a true Right, what we mean by the Right, ought to be defined in terms of forces and traditions that acted formatively on a group of nations, and sometimes also on super-national unifications, before the French Revolution, before the advent of the Third Estate and the world of the masses, and before bourgeois and industrial culture, with all its consequences and its games, which consist of actions and concordant reactions that have led to the contemporary chaos and to all that threatens to destroy the little that still remains of European culture and European prestige.

Please do not ask us to be more precise, because that would be equivalent to asking for a systematic exposition of a general doctrine of the state. In part, the reader can refer to our book called *Men Among the Ruins*. Greater precision, however, will become clear as we examine the various topics we shall discuss as we proceed.

II

'Neo-Fascism' is the name given today by both democrats and Communists to the 'national' forces in Italy that are most decisively opposed to both currents. To the extent that these forces accept this designation unreservedly, a situation is created that is full of errors and lends itself, dangerously, to the enemies' game. Incidentally, we owe the acceptance of this name to the talk, obviously in a pejorative sense, of 'nostalgics' and 'nostalgia'. Fascism has undergone a process of what can be called *mythologising*. In regard to it, the attitude taken by most people has an emotional and irrational character, instead of a critical and intellectual one. This is especially true for those who maintain an ideological loyalty to yesterday's Italy. They have made Mussolini and Fascism into objects of a 'myth' and they keep their eye on a reality that is historically conditioned and on the man who was its centre, instead of on political ideas that should be taken seriously in themselves and for themselves, independently of these historical accidents, so as to be able to maintain forever their normative value in regard to a clearly defined political system.

In the case we are now discussing, mythologising has naturally had as its counterpart *idealising*, that is, emphasising only the positive sides of the Fascist regime, while intentionally or unconsciously ignoring the negative sides. The same procedure is practiced in the opposite direction by the anti-national forces for a mythologising having instead as its counterpart systematic denigration, the construction of a myth of Fascism in which only the most problematic sides are tendentiously emphasised so as to discredit all of it or to make people hate it.

In the second case, it is well-known that bad faith and partisan passion are manifestly at the basis of a further procedure and a style of arguing deprived of all legitimacy. They claim, that is, to establish a causal nexus between what exclusively concerns the ups and downs and consequences of a lost war and the intrinsic value of Fascist doctrine. For any rigorous thinking, this kind of nexus is absolutely arbitrary. We have to assert that the eventual value of Fascism as doctrine (apart from a given international politics) is as little prejudiced by the results of a lost war as it would be proven or confirmed by a war that, instead, was won. The two planes of principle and historical contingency are absolutely distinct, with all respect to the historicist

dogma *Weltgeschichte ist Weltgericht*,[1] the favourite slogan of men who lack a backbone.

Beyond any partisan one-sidedness, those who, unlike the 'nostalgics' of the new generation, were alive during the Fascist period, and so have a direct experience of the system and its men, know and acknowledge that not everything was in order in Fascism. As long as Fascism existed and could be considered as a restorative movement in progress, with its possibilities not yet exhausted and crystallised, it was only fair not to carry criticism beyond a certain point. Those who, like us, while defending an order of ideas that coincided only in part with Fascism (or German National Socialism), did not condemn these movements (despite being well aware of their problematic or deviant aspects), did so counting precisely on further possible developments — to be enthusiastically favoured by every means — that would have rectified or eliminated these problems.

Today, when Fascism stands behind us as a reality of past history, our attitude cannot be the same. Instead of the idealisation appropriate to 'myth', we need to separate the positive from the negative, not only for theoretical ends, but also for a practical orientation for a possible political struggle. Therefore it is not right to accept the epithet of 'Fascist' or 'neo-Fascist' *tout court*.[2] We should call ourselves Fascist (if we decide to do so) in relation to what was positive in Fascism, but not Fascist in relation to what was not positive in Fascism.

Readers need to bear in mind that, apart from the positive and negative elements in the character of Fascism which we have just mentioned, a movement susceptible to development contained several different tendencies, and only the future could have told us which ones would have prevailed, if military defeat and the internal collapse of the nation had not paralysed everything. In Italy — and Germany, too — national unity did not exclude significant tensions within the system. We are not alluding here to simple ideological tendencies represented by one group or another. Such tendencies were, for the most part, of little significance, and we shall ignore them in the present examination. We are dealing rather with elements that concern the structure of the Fascist system and regime, taken concretely, in its governmental and, generally, institutional reality. This is the second and more important reason for the need to overcome mythologising and not to take Fascism in an undifferentiated manner. If, then, one thinks of the two fascisms, the classic form of the 'Twenty Years'

[1] German: 'World history is the world's tribunal', an expression that was coined by Schiller and later used by Hegel.

[2] French: 'in short', here used in the sense of 'without qualification'.

from 1922-1943[3] and the Fascism of the Italian Social Republic (1943-1945),[4] which were, indeed, united by a continuity of loyalty and willingness to fight, but are, on the other hand, notably different as political doctrines, partly because of the fatal influence of circumstances, it will be even clearer how much the problems of discrimination and 'myth' lead to dangerous conclusions that prejudice a decisive and coherent alignment.

Concerning this issue, the point that must be emphasised is the need to broaden horizons and have a sense of distance. The reality of today is that, while one group considers Fascism as a simple 'parenthesis' and aberration in our more recent history, others resemble people who have been born today and believe that nothing has existed before yesterday. Both these attitudes are inadequate, and we must energetically oppose anyone who claims that the choice must be between Fascism or anti-Fascism in an attempt to exhaust every political possibility and discussion. One consequence of this simple polarity is, for example, that no one can be anti-democratic without automatically being 'Fascist' — or Communist. This closed circle is absurd, and in this connection we must return to our initial considerations, by denouncing the myopic perspective it implies.

Even in looking for positive elements in Fascism, there is an essential difference between two different positions. On the one hand, there are those who take Fascism for their one and only reference point, and make their own political, historical and doctrinal horizon begin and end with Fascism (as well as analogous movements in other countries — German National Socialism, Belgian Rexism,[5] the early Spanish

[3] Il Ventennio ('The Twenty Years') is a common expression for the period between the 'March on Rome' in October 1922, when Mussolini was appointed as the leader of Italy by the King, and July 1943, when he submitted his resignation to the King.

[4] The Italian Social Republic, also sometimes known as the Salò Republic due to its being headquartered there, was the government of Fascist exiles which was set up in northern Italy, with German military support, following the occupation of the south by the Allies. Once Mussolini was instated as its head of state in September 1943, Mussolini returned to his socialist roots, and said that he had been prevented from realising the genuine Fascist revolution by political contingencies, and pledged to create a new Fascist state that was much more republican and socialist in nature.

[5] The Rexist movement was a fascist movement with a strongly Catholic character founded by Léon Degrelle in 1930. Following the occupation of Belgium by the Germans in 1940, the Rexists divided into two camps, one of which resisted the occupiers, the other, including Degrelle himself, having collaborated with them.

Falange,[6] Salazar's regime in Portugal,[7] and the Rumanian Iron Guard;[8] it was only the other day that one could speak of a 'worldwide revolution' as of a general movement in opposition to the proletarian revolution). On the other hand, there are those who consider what was present in these movements in terms of particular forms that were more or less imperfect and adapted to circumstances, but in which ideas and principles of that earlier tradition of which we have spoken were manifested and active. (In these ideas and principles we should recognise a character of 'normality' and consistency.) These people lead these movements' original aspects, which are 'revolutionary' in the strict sense, back into the domain of the secondary and contingent. In brief, it is a question of reconnecting Fascism wherever possible with the great European political tradition, and to separate out that which existed in it only because of compromise, of divergent and absolutely deviant possibilities, and of phenomena that in part suffered from the same evils it was reacting against and attempting to combat.

[NOTE: A vast literature on Fascism exists, with a corresponding variety of interpretations, but there cannot be found in it a single work that follows this point of view. When it is not partisan, it has a sociological, 'historicist' or socio-economic character. The categories it employs are those of a 'modern' mentality that, as such, ignores the principles that are the basis of our discrimination and the very significance of a true Right. Probably the most complete and recent review is contained in Renzo De Felice's book, *Le interpretazioni del fascismo* (Laterza: Bari, 1969).[9] We do not understand how the author can say (p. 6)[10] that the present work,

[6] The Falange was founded by José Antonio Primo de Rivera in 1933. In 1937, following the execution of Primo de Rivera during the Spanish Civil War, the leadership of the Falange passed to Francisco Franco, who unified the movement with other nationalist groups, stripping it of much of its fascist character.

[7] António de Oliveira Salazar became Prime Minister of Portugal in 1932. He redesigned the Portuguese constitution along corporatist lines, calling his form of government the 'New State'. The New State persisted until 1974, when it was dissolved following a military coup.

[8] The Iron Guard, or the Legion of the Archangel Michael, was a militant revolutionary group formed by Corneliu Codreanu in 1927. It was strongly anti-democratic, anti-capitalist, anti-Communist, and anti-Semitic. It differed from other European Right-wing movements of the period due to its spiritual basis, as the Iron Guard was deeply imbued with Rumanian Orthodox mysticism. They succeeded in taking power in Rumania for four months in 1940, but were soon ousted in a coup.

[9] Renzo De Felice, Interpretations of Fascism (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977).

[10] The passage reads, 'It is, however, a fact that during [the 1960s] – despite these discussions, which were especially lively in Italy and in Germany – the debate in Europe on Fascism continued to revolve substantially around these [older] interpretations; other voices were virtually silent. Even the Fascist

which he cites (in its first edition), has opposed nothing to current interpretations, which he calls 'classic' interpretations, of Fascism. The point of view we follow, which is not a simple interpretation, but is essentially discriminating and normative, constitutes a fundamental difference. Anyhow, De Felice has stated that he 'does not linger over all aspects of Fascist reality, nor, even less, the directly ideological one', while it is precisely this 'ideological' aspect (which we prefer to call doctrinal) that we hold to be essential, and take most especially into account.]

Today, when we do not have the concrete reality of Fascism in front of us in its specific and challenging historical situation, all this is certainly possible, and also indicates the only way that is practically offered to 'national' forces, given that 'nostalgia' and mythologising are of little use, and since it is impossible to bring Mussolini back to life or have a new one custom-made. The present situation is different from the circumstances that made Fascism possible in its historical aspect.

In the terms I have indicated, it is not difficult to discover the possible superior significance assumed by that discrimination — which is obviously also an integration — of Fascism (and its integration into the traditional legacy). Beyond every confusion and weakness, it offers a touchstone for possible vocations. A great mind of the nineteenth century, Donoso Cortès,[11] spoke of the times that lay ahead for Europe, and which were heralded by the first revolutionary and socialist uprisings, as times 'of absolute negations and sovereign affirmations'. Despite the depths in which we find ourselves, it is still possible to have this sentiment today.

As for the matter of the brief examination that we are about to undertake, it will be limited to what became structural and institutional reality, the regime and the concrete praxis that led from the various forces that nourished the Fascist movement with regard to the principles that can be gathered from all this, directly or indirectly. Since the centre of crystallisation of these forces was Mussolini, we shall refer to the positions of Mussolini for an understanding of Fascist doctrine, which are defined by means of the internal logic of the movement of which he was the head, because, as is well-known, unlike Communism and, in part, National Socialism, Fascism did not have an exactly formulated and univocal doctrine that preceded action and the 'revolution'. (Mussolini himself recognised, 'In Fascism, the deed has preceded

survivors have been unable to confront these interpretations with one of their own.' In a footnote appended at the end of it, De Felice cites the first edition of the present book as an example of this, without further explanation.

[11] Juan Donoso Cortès (1809-1853) was a Spanish Catholic political thinker who opposed the ideals of the French Revolution.

doctrine.')[12] As we have mentioned, we shall leave on one side those often discordant ideological tendencies which remained that way, and which, after the conquest of power, belonged to particular small groups to which, by and large, a rather extensive liberty of expression was allowed, probably due to the fact that their influence was, for practical purposes, almost non-existent.

[12] Mussolini expressed this idea in the 1932 essay, 'The Doctrine of Fascism'. This was an official article which was composed by Giovanni Gentile and approved by Mussolini and published in the Enciclopedia Italiana 14, and which was included in Mussolini's Opera Omnia, volume 34.

III

The fundamental significance that Fascism gradually assumed as it defined itself and triumphed is, from our point of view, that of a reaction, stemming from the forces of the returning veterans and nationalists, in response to a crisis that was essentially a crisis of the very idea of the state, of authority and of centralised power in Italy.

In the period that immediately followed the First World War, Italy presented itself as a secular state, in which the influence of Freemasonry was considerable, with a weak and mediocre liberal democratic government and a monarchy without real power; in other words, constitutional and parliamentary, a state that on the whole lacked a 'myth' in the positive sense, that is, a superior animating and formative idea that could have made of it something more than a mere structure of public administration. It became increasingly obvious that a nation in these conditions was in no position to confront the serious problems imposed by the forces set in motion by the war and the post-war period, nor to combat the revolutionary social lures diffused in the masses and the proletariat by Leftist activists.

Thus, the merit of Fascism was, above all, to have revived in Italy the idea of the state and to have created the basis for an active government, by affirming the pure principle of authority and political sovereignty. This was, so to speak, the positive point of the outcome of the movement as it gradually defined itself and freed itself from its original chief components: a revolutionary veterans' movement, a generically nationalist one and also a semi-Sorelian labour unionism.[1]

According to this view, we could speak of a type of 'vector' reversal and displacement of the momentum of Italian interventionism, the movement to enter the First World War. In fact, in an ideological sense, interventionism, as we have emphasised, involved moving Italy into the camp of global democracy, which had joined forces to oppose the Central Powers,[2] and in various aspects was related to the spirit of the *Risorgimento*, the political movement that united Italy, and therefore to

[1] Georges Sorel (1847-1922) was a French philosopher who began as a Marxist and later developed Revolutionary Syndicalism. He advocated the use of myth and organised violence in revolutionary movements. He was influential upon both the Communist and Fascist movements. His primary works are Reflections on Violence and The Illusions of Progress.

[2] The Central Powers consisted of Imperial Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire (and, later, Bulgaria).

the ideas of 1848. Existentially, however, interventionism had its own autonomous revolutionary significance, and the war was an occasion for the awakening of forces that were intolerant of bourgeois Italy, forces like the veterans' movement that nourished Fascism. By rejecting a return to 'normalcy' in this climate, these forces changed poles ideologically and oriented themselves towards the Right, towards the ideal of the hierarchical state and the 'military nation'. Socialist and purely insurrectional (not to say republican) tendencies of the period before the March on Rome were rapidly eliminated. We must put this 'existential' aspect of Fascism in the correct light to evaluate it. As for the other aspect, this was the reason why Mussolini, once he had obtained power, could predict the rise of new hierarchies and speak of a new 'century of authority, a century of the Right, a century of Fascism'.[3] When he affirmed (in 1926), 'We stand for a new principle in [today's] world, we stand for sheer, categorical, definitive antithesis to the world of democracy, plutocracy, Freemasonry, to the world which still abides by the fundamental principles laid down in 1789',[4] he highlighted the 'counterrevolutionary' momentum as one of the most essential aspects assumed by his movement.

Structurally, to a certain degree, one could therefore apply to Fascism the same designation of a potential 'conservative revolution'[5] that was used for trends that arose in Germany after the First World War and before the rise of Hitlerism, and which likewise shared a significant component of veterans. Conservatism here, however, needs to be limited to certain political principles (principles to which the ideology of the French Revolution represented the negation), not to a pre-existing

[3] In 'The Doctrine of Fascism', Mussolini wrote, 'Admitting that the Nineteenth Century was the century of Socialism, Liberalism and Democracy, it is not said that the Twentieth Century must also be the century of Socialism, of Liberalism, of Democracy. Political doctrines pass on, but peoples remain. One may now think that this will be the century of authority, the century of the "right wing" the century of Fascism.'

[4] Mussolini said this in a speech on 7 April 1926, quoted in the Appendix to 'The Doctrine of Fascism'.

[5] The Conservative Revolution is a term first coined by Hugo von Hoffmansthal, which has come to designate a loose confederation of anti-liberal German thinkers who wrote during the Weimar Republic. There was a great diversity of views within the ranks of the Conservative Revolutionaries, but in general they opposed both democratic capitalism and Communism in favour of a synthesis of the German (and especially Prussian) aristocratic traditions with socialism. Spengler advocated one form of this doctrine which he termed 'Prussian socialism'. The Conservative Revolutionaries opposed liberalism in all its forms, rejected a return to the Kaiser's Reich, and saw Germany as being culturally tilted more towards Russia than towards France or Britain. The standard scholarly study of the Conservative Revolution is Armin Mohler's Die Konservative Revolution in Deutschland, 1918-1933 (Stuttgart: F. Vorwerk, 1950), followed by many later revisions and re-printings.

factual reality, because we have seen that in the earlier, pre-Fascist Italy, there was nothing that could give a superior and positive content to conservatism. There was very little that was worthy of being 'conserved'. Unlike the parallel German movement we have just mentioned, in various regards Fascism practically had to start from zero in Italy. This fact also explains, if it does not justify, some of its problematic aspects.

From the point of view of principle, every socialist and democratic ideology was surpassed in Fascist political doctrine. The state was recognised as possessing pre-eminence in respect to people and nation, that is, the dignity of a single superior power through which the nation acquires a real self-awareness, possesses a form and a will, and participates in a supernatural order. Mussolini could affirm (1924): 'Without the State there is no nation. There are merely human aggregations subject to all the disintegrations which history may inflict upon them',[6] and 'The nation does not beget the State […] On the contrary, the nation is created by the State, which gives the people […] the will, and thereby an effective existence.'[7] The formula 'The people is the body of the state and the state is the spirit of the people' (1934), if adequately interpreted, brings us back to the Classical idea of a dynamic and creative relationship between 'form' and 'matter' (body). The state is the 'form' conceived as an organising and animating force, according to the interpretation given to 'matter' and 'form' in traditional philosophy, starting with Aristotle.

Therefore, this view rejects the hollow conception of a state which is supposed to limit itself to protecting the 'negative liberties' of the citizens as simple empirical individuals, 'guaranteeing a certain well-being and a relatively peaceful communal life together', in essence reflecting or passively following the forces of social and economic reality which are conceived as its basis. It is also the opposite of the idea of a pure bureaucracy of 'public administration', according to the bloated image of what can be the form and spirit of any individualistic society with purely utilitarian ends.

When Fascism affirmed the trinomial of 'authority, order and justice' next to this basic conception, it is undeniable that Fascism renewed the tradition that formed every greater European state. We know then that Fascism recalled, or tried to recall, the Roman idea as the supreme and specific integration of the 'myth' of the new political organism, 'strong and organic'. The Roman tradition, for Mussolini, was not supposed to be rhetoric and tinsel, but an 'idea of force' and also an ideal for the

[6] Speech delivered on 8 August 1924, quoted in the Appendix to 'The Doctrine of Fascism'.
[7] Mussolini, 'The Doctrine of Fascism'.

formation of the new type of man who ought to have power in his hands. 'Rome is our starting point and our point of reference; it is our symbol or, if you prefer, our myth' (1922).[8] This statement bore witness to a precise choice of purpose, but also a great audacity. It was like building a bridge over a hiatus of centuries, to regain contact with the only truly valid legacy of all the history that has taken place on Italian soil. A certain positive continuity, however, was established only to a limited degree concerning the significance of the state and authority (*imperium*, in the Classical sense) and also in relation to a virile ethics and a style of rigour and discipline that Fascism proposed to Italians. In official Fascism, however, there was no place for a deepening of the further dimensions of the Roman symbol — symbolic dimensions in the true sense, of a worldview — and the clarification of the Roman character to which it should properly be referred. The elements that could have undertaken this task were either non-existent or were not utilised.

[NOTE: For this clarification it would have been necessary to also confront the problem of the relations between that which was classically Roman and Christianity (and Catholicism), something Mussolini always avoided out of political prudence. (One of our writings from that time,[9] which posed the problem in an extreme way, found no echo in the right place.) About the other point, referring to the further dimensions of the Roman symbol, it is significant that the best the regime could do was to support the so-called Institute of Roman Studies,[10] whose activities were kept to the agnostic ones of philological, archaeological and mediocre learned exercises, without any direction of political, ethical or spiritual effectiveness, so much so that this Institute exists to this day, in anti-Fascist democratic Italy, in the identical form of yesterday.]

[8] From a speech given by Mussolini on 21 April 1922, quoted in Peter Godman, Hitler and the Vatican (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), p. 10.

[9] Julius Evola, Heathen Imperialism.

[10] The Institute was created by the Fascists in 1925, intended to help connect Fascism's pedigree to that of the Roman Empire. It continues to exist today, albeit with very different goals.

IV

In the essential lines of its doctrine of the state, which we have just discussed, Fascism's message should be considered, from the point of view of the Right, absolutely positive. We find ourselves right in the orbit of healthy, traditional political thought, and it is starting from this point that the partisan polemic against Fascism, which is one-sidedly denigrating, should be clearly rejected. There is another side to the story, however. On the one hand, it is a good idea to clarify what ought to have been the ultimate implications of the doctrine, which should have been accentuated to assure it a clear character. On the other, it is necessary to indicate the points in which the principal deviations are manifested in the Fascist system and its praxis.

Concerning the first point, we shall limit ourselves to emphasising that the principle of the pre-eminence of the state before everything that is simply people and nation should be articulated further through the ideal opposition between state and 'society'. Under the term 'society' are united all those values, interests and dispositions that enter into the physical and vegetative side of the community and the individuals that compose it. In reality, there is a fundamental antithesis of doctrine between political systems that focus on the idea of the state and those that focus on the idea of 'society' (the 'social' type of state). The second type of system includes the varieties of theories based upon the concept of natural rights, contract theory with a utilitarian base, and democracy, with the related developments that stretch from liberal democracy to the so-called 'people's democracies', that is, Marxist and Communist ones.

Connected to this dualism is the definition of the political level as such in terms, so to speak, of 'transcendence'. Here, the question arises of the 'heroic' or military content, of service as honour and loyalty in the higher sense that can achieve existence with reference to the state, or at least some aspects of existence. We are dealing with a certain ideal high tension that brings us not only beyond hedonistic values (those of simple material well-being), but also eudemonistic ones (that is, ones including spiritual well-being). It is undeniable that Fascism strove to emphasise this dimension of political reality (which we should distinguish from the purely 'social' dimension), as well as the aspiration for an existence that was anti-bourgeois, combative and even

dangerous (the famous 'live dangerously',[1] taken by Mussolini from Nietzsche: all this was an echo of the existential component the veterans of the World War brought to the Fascist movement). There was also the demand to integrate man through means of an 'immanent relation to a higher law, endowed with an objective will transcending the individual and raising him to conscious membership of a spiritual society'.[2] The formulation of this demand is significant, even if its content was never adequately defined.

There are various possible judgments one can make regarding the concrete forms with which Fascism tried to meet this demand so as to consider itself the perfect representative of the doctrine of the state we have just discussed. Recognising the superficial and contrived character of the various initiatives and customs of Fascist Italy should not provide a pretext for neglecting a problem which is of fundamental importance no less now than then. It is basically a question of the problem of how to confront an impulse of 'self-transcendence' that can be repressed and silenced, but never completely eliminated, except in the extreme case of systematically degrading people into a bovine state. Yesterday's 'nationalist revolutions' tried to furnish a political centre to crystallise this impulse (again, this is the action we have mentioned of 'form' on 'matter'), to impede its running wild and its onset or breaking out into destructive forms. Indeed, no one can ignore the deep crisis of the 'rationalising' of existence attempted by bourgeois culture, given the many examples of the emerging of the irrational or 'elemental' (in the sense of the elemental character of a force of nature) through the fissures of this culture on every level.

Today, with the return of this obsession with 'rationalising', there is a tendency to render service to an ideal that is not political but 'social' and which belongs to physical comfort, and to marginalise and discredit everything that is comprised of existential tension, heroism and the galvanising force of a myth. But it has been correctly pointed out that a profound crisis is inevitable at the point when prosperity and comfort will finally become *boring*. The early signs of this crisis are already apparent. They consist of all those forms of blind, anarchic and destructive revolts embraced by a youth that, precisely in the most prosperous nations, notice the absurdity and senselessness of an existence that is socialised, rationalised,

[1] 'For – believe me – the secret for harvesting from existence the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment is – to live dangerously! Build your cities on the slopes of Vesuvius!' From Friedrich Nietzsche, The Gay Science (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), section 283, p. 161.
[2] Mussolini, 'The Doctrine of Fascism'.

materialistic, and dominated by the so-called 'consumer culture'. In these revolts, this elementary impulse finds no object and, left to itself, becomes barbaric.

In traditional societies, there has always existed a certain liturgy or mystique of power and sovereignty that was an integral part of the system, and which furnished a solution to the problem we have been addressing. So there is no good reason for heavy-handed accusations against the initiatives taken by Fascism and its desire to maintain a general climate of high tension. We should rather recognise the line beyond which there is only self-parody or insincerity in a system limited by the incongruity between principles and intents, on the one hand, and a given human substance, on the other.

Strictly speaking, in this context we confront a problem that we can only touch on in the present investigation. We are referring to the accusation that a political system of the type with which we are now dealing usurps a religious significance, that it diverts the human capacity for belief and self-sacrifice and, in general, its power for self-transcendence from its legitimate object, which would be precisely religion, and directs it towards secular surrogates. Clearly, insofar as this objection has weight, it begins from a substantial and insuperable dualism between the world of the state and the spiritual world, the world of the sacred. So it is necessary to see clearly what such a dualism entails. It implies, on the one hand, desecrating and reducing to the material all that is politics, power and authority and, on the other, denying reality to all that is spiritual and sacred. This is also the natural consequence of the command, 'Give unto Caesar'.[3] All the attempts of political theology to cover over the rift it has created lead only to compromise. On the other hand, we need to recognise that this schism was not known in a whole series of traditional political organisms in Europe and elsewhere. In traditional states, one or another form of the consecration of power and authority constituted the fulcrum and legitimation of the entire system. If authority and sovereignty do not possess some type of spiritual chrism[4] in principle, they do not even deserve to be called by these names, and the entire system of the true state turns out to lack any solid gravitational centre for everything that cannot be reduced to a mere administrative and 'social' system instead of contributing to the climate of high tension we have discussed.

The general situation of the epoch, and the significance that Catholicism as a social force had in Italy, were bound to prevent Fascism from directly confronting

[3] Matthew 22:21: 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.'

[4] A type of anointing oil used in many branches of Christianity.

the serious problem of the ultimate chrism of the state, although it ought to have been led to confront it, *inter alia*, also by the natural implications of a true, courageous revival of the Roman idea. So, in fact, it continued to oscillate back and forth. On the one hand, Mussolini repeatedly claimed for Fascism a 'religious' value, but, on the other, he did not specify what that religious character ought to be, insofar as it was associated with the political idea and therefore was different from a common, shapeless devotion aimed at what is above this world. He announced that 'the state has no theology, but it has a morality'. This statement, too, is ambiguous, because every morality, if it is to have a profound justification and an intrinsically normative character, if it is not to be a mere convenience of communal living, must have a 'transcendent' basis, through which it brings us to a plane no different from the religious one, where 'theology' too receives its form. So, especially where the education and formation of the new generation were relevant, it was only natural that there were often conflicts between Fascism and the representatives of the dominant religion, who were intent on monopolising everything that had a properly spiritual character by relying on the provisions of the Concordat of 1929.[5]

On the other hand, it is sufficiently clear that, unless we confront this problem, it is not possible to reject completely certain interpretations of movements of the 'fascist' type that see them as a regime of surrogates in a desacralised world, in the context of modern secularised and 'pagan' cults. In this way, even elements like struggle and heroism, loyalty and sacrifice, contempt for death, and so on can take on an irrational, naturalistic, tragic and dark character (Keyserling[6] talked about a *telluric* colouring of the 'worldwide revolution'), when this higher and, in a certain way, transfiguring reference point is lacking, of which it is said that it necessarily belongs to a level that transcends the domain of simple ethics.

Passing to another subject, syncretism, we must point out that, if in Fascist doctrine there was a sufficient emphasis on the opposition we have mentioned

[5] In 1929, an agreement was signed between the Vatican and the Italian government at the instigation of Mussolini. In addition to regularising relations between the state and the Church, which had been at odds since 1870, it also granted the Vatican political independence from the Kingdom of Italy for the first time in the modern era. It was one of the signal triumphs of Mussolini's first decade in power. Evola wrote Heathen Imperialism in opposition to it.

[6] Count Hermann Graf von Keyserling (1880-1946) was a German philosopher from Estonia who wrote about his extensive world travels. He rejected organised religion, and in 1920, he founded his 'School of Wisdom' at Darmstadt, Germany, which taught that wisdom could be gained from a syncretic approach to religion and philosophy. He also preached pacifism and democracy, and opposed the National Socialists. He was very influential in his day.

between what is political and what is 'social', an analogous opposition was not formulated specifically in regard to a nationalism that appeals to simple sentiments of fatherland and people, which is associated with a 'traditionalism' that, because of the character of the preceding history of Italy, could have nothing in common with Tradition understood in a higher sense,[7] but was associated with a mediocre conservatism of the bourgeois variety: priggish, superficially Catholic and conformist. The nationalist current began with reference points like these, and tried to organise as political activists (the 'Blueshirts')[8] against subversive movements in Italy. Their joining the Fascist movement contributed to a certain blurring of the Fascist political idea. Of course, we cannot neglect the conditional character to which politics is subject, since it is the 'art of the possible'. In recent times, the pathos of the 'fatherland' and the appeal to 'national' sentiments in the struggle against currents of the Left has been one of the few useful means left. Thus in contemporary Italy, the 'nationalist' stance often counts as synonymous with a 'Rightist stance'. From the point of view of principles, however, we have here a confusion analogous to the one we have already observed for which liberalism, long a *bête noire*[9] for men of the Right, can today be considered as a Rightist position.

Historically, the connection between 'nationalist' movements and revolutionary ones based on the principles of 1789 is undeniable, even without going back to the distant period in which the erosion of Medieval feudal and imperial culture in Europe provoked the rise and emancipation of 'nations', even as monarchical national states. From the point of view of doctrine, it is very important to understand the naturalistic and, in a certain way, pre-political character that the sentiments of fatherland and nation present (a pre-political and naturalistic character similar to that of the sentiment of family), compared especially to what instead unites men on the political level on the basis of an idea and a symbol of sovereignty. At any rate, every patriotic pathos will always have something collectivising about it. It calls to mind what has been called 'the mob condition'. We shall come back to this point. Right now we

[7] Evola here used the term Tradition in the same sense as René Guénon; namely, as a set of transcendental metaphysical principles which lies at the heart of all authentic religions, and which remains the same even when there are differences in the exoteric practices and doctrines. Evola fully explicated his doctrine of Tradition in his 1934 book, Revolt Against the Modern World.

[8] The Italian Nationalist Association, founded in 1910, was Italy's first nationalist party, and sought to appeal to the working class as well as the wealthy. The Blueshirts were its paramilitary arm. It merged into the Fascist Party in 1923.

[9] French: 'black beast'. The expression signifies something that is particularly and strongly disliked.

believe it legitimate to say that there was confusion in regard to the significance that the myth of the nation in general had in Fascism, which was accompanied by the corresponding slogans and extensions bordering on populism (apart from what can be attributed to the integration of the earlier nationalist party, which we just mentioned). If the syncretism of all this with the doctrine, which we clearly formulated and explained in its traditional meaning, of the pre-eminence of the state in respect to the nation can be considered a characteristic of Fascism as a factual reality, this does not change the fact that, according to pure Rightist thought, there is hybridism in this commingling, and that its components must be distinguished and related to two very distinct ideological worlds.

Given most people's mentality, this clarification in regard to the value of the concept of fatherland and nation, for the goal of purifying the ideal of the true state, could not be emphasised. Still, it will perhaps be helpful to observe how easy it would be to abuse the appeal to fatherland and nation using an impudent and bombastic rhetoric for the most disgraceful ends. We see it today in the patriotism on display in Italy for tactical and electoral ends even by political parties that, in their essence, tend not only to oppose the state but also to negate the higher content that can eventually be gathered by a purified and dignified nationalism. After all, in Russia they can talk of the 'Soviet fatherland' and yesterday, in the war of the Soviets against Germany, they were able to make an appeal to the patriotism of the 'comrades'. This is a real absurdity, if we look at things from the point of view of pure Communist ideology. Finally we can notice that, despite the syncretisms we have indicated, the idea of the transcendent reality of the state did not fail to be noted as a characteristic of Fascism, which differentiated it from similar movements. For instance, it was often felt as its distinctive, 'Roman', element when compared to the National Socialist ideology in which the emphasis fell rather (at least in doctrine) on the people-race and the so-called *Volksgemeinschaft*.[10]

[NOTE: We remember on this subject a conversation we had in Bucharest in 1938 with Corneliu Codreanu,[11] the leader of the Rumanian Iron Guard, one of the

[10] In German this references the concept of 'the people's community'. During the National Socialist era, this was related to the idea of the people being rooted in the specific 'blood and soil' of the German nation, and of the abolition of class differences.

[11] Corneliu Codreanu (1899-1938) was originally a lawyer, who began agitating against democracy and Communism in the new Rumanian state after the First World War. After he became a threat to the existing regime, he was arrested and executed. Evola met with him in Bucharest shortly before his death.

brightest and most idealistic figures of the 'nationalist' movements of the preceding period. To indicate the differences between Fascism, National Socialism and his own movement, Codreanu referred to the three principles of a human organism: its form, its vital force and its spirit. He said by way of analogy that a movement of political resurgence, while not neglecting the other two, could appeal especially to one of them, in the vaster organism corresponding to the nation. For him, Fascism had concentrated its interest on the element of 'form', like the Roman doctrine of the state. National Socialism emphasised the vital force by its references to 'race' and *Volk*.[12] Codreanu himself wanted to start from spirit and give a religious colour, or rather a mystical one, to his movement.]

As for the dangers presented by the Fascist system from the point of view not of a shapeless liberal democracy, but rather of a true Right, perhaps the most serious one is its so-called totalitarianism.

The principle of a central authority that cannot be controverted becomes 'sclerotic' and degenerate when it is affirmed through a system that controls everything, regiments everything and intervenes in everything according to the noted formula, 'Everything in the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state.'[13] Where it is not made clear *in what terms* it is necessary to conceive this inclusion, a formula like this can be valid only in the context of Stalinism of the Soviet type, given its materialist, collectivist and mechanistic premises; not for a system of the traditional type based on spiritual values, the recognition of the significance of the person and the hierarchical principle. It is only in a political polemic that it is possible to imagine a common denominator between totalitarianism of the Right and totalitarianism of the Left, which is a real absurdity.

The traditional state is organic, but not totalitarian. It is differentiated and articulated, and admits zones of partial autonomy. It coordinates forces and causes them to participate in a superior unity, while recognising their liberty. Exactly because it is strong, it does not need to resort to mechanical centralising, which is required only when it is necessary to rein in a shapeless and atomistic mass of individuals and wills, from which, however, disorder can never be truly eliminated,

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Evola's essays recounting their meeting have been published in English as appendices to Corneliu Codreanu, The Prison Notes (United States: Reconquista Press, 2011).

[12] German: 'people', as in the people of a nation.

[13] This phrase, which became a Fascist slogan, was first used by Mussolini in a speech on 26 May 1927, quoted in Benito Mussolini, Fascism: Doctrine and Institutions (Rome: Ardita, 1935), pp. 38-40.

but only temporarily contained. To use a happy expression of Walter Heinrich,[14] the true state is *omnia potens*, not *omnia faciens*;[15] that is, it keeps at the centre an absolute power that it can and must use without obstacles in cases of necessity and ultimate decisions, ignoring the fetish for the so-called 'rule of law'. It does not, however, meddle with everything, it does not substitute itself for everything, it does not aim at a barracks-style regimentation of society (in the negative sense), nor at a levelling conformism instead of free acknowledgement and loyalty. It does not proceed by means of impertinent and obtuse interventions by the public sphere and the 'state' into the private sphere. The traditional image is that of a natural gravitation of parts and partial unities around a centre that commands without compelling, and acts out of prestige with an authority that can, of course, resort to force, but abstains from it as much as possible. The evidence of the effective force of a state is found in the measure of the margin it can concede to a partial, rational decentralisation. Systematic state interference can be a principle only in the socialism of the technocratic and materialist state.

[NOTE: As a supplementary observation, it can be said that all decentralisation has to act in a disaggregating fashion when there is a lack of central political power. This is why regionalism (where the region has its own constitution), the basis of the current democratic regime in Italy – a weak, ephemeral and hollow regime – is a simple mistake, a clear sign of political blindness. In addition we should note that the character of an organic unity cannot be recognised in the Italian 'region'. It is a purely administrative structure lacking the ties and formative traditions that characterised, for instance, the various German *Länder*.[16] The Italian regions are so many segments of the national mass, first rendered formless by democracy.]

In opposition to socialism, the essential task of the true state is creating a given general, and in a certain sense immaterial, climate, according to what was found in all preceding regimes. This is the necessary condition for a system in which liberty is always the fundamental factor that can take form in a way that is virtually

[14] Walter Heinrich (1902-1984) was a Sudeten German economist and sociologist who was active in efforts to unify the Sudeten Germans during the 1930s. He rejected the idea of unifying the Sudetenland with the Third Reich, however, and because of this he was briefly imprisoned in the Dachau concentration camp following its annexation by Germany. He was also a theorist of the corporate state. After the war, he became a noted macroeconomist in Austria.

[15] Latin: 'All powerful' but not 'doing all'.

[16] Germany is comprised of sixteen Länder, being states which retain a degree of autonomy although they are subordinate to the central authority of the German federal state.

spontaneous, and which can function in the right way with a minimum of rectifying interventions. In this regard, there is a significant antithesis on the economic level between the North American model, where the federal government had to promulgate a strict anti-trust law to fight the forms of piracy and cynical economic despotism that arose in the climate of 'liberty' and free trade and, on the other hand, the model of contemporary West Germany where, because of a different climate, which should be considered largely a residual legacy of earlier regimes and connected to some racial dispositions, economic liberty is realised in an essentially positive and constructive sense, without the state intervening to centralise or rein in the market.[17]

Where fascism presented a 'totalitarian' character, we should think of this as a deviation from its deepest and most valid demands. In fact, Mussolini could speak of the state as 'a system of hierarchies' — hierarchies that 'should have a soul' and culminate in an elite, an ideal that is obviously different from the totalitarian ideal. Since we have spoken of the economy — but we shall return to that subject — Mussolini disavowed the so-called 'pan-corporatist' tendency that really had a totalitarian character. The Fascist Charter of Labour openly recognised the importance of private initiative. In addition, we could refer to the very symbol of the lictors'[18] fasces,[19] from which the Blackshirts took the name of the movement for anti-democratic and anti-Marxist revolution and, according to Mussolini's phrase, was supposed to signify 'unity, will and discipline'. In fact, the fasces are composed of distinct branches united around a central axis that, according to an archaic symbolism that is common to many ancient traditions, expresses the power from on high, the pure principle of *imperium*. Therefore it has unity and, at the same time, multiplicity, united organically and in synergy, in visible correspondence with the ideas we mentioned above.

On the other hand, the present Italian democratic state has shown that it can be, under 'social' pretexts, much more invasive into private life and capable of expanding

[17] Evola's contrast between the United States and post-war West Germany is made clearly in Wilhelm Röpke, Jenseits von Angebot und Nachfrage [Beyond Supply and Demand], which was translated into English as A Humane Economy: The Social Framework of the Free Market (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1960), and absurdly promoted by conventional American free market advocates.

[18] In Classical Rome, the lictors were bodyguards and assistants charged with protecting the political leadership. While escorting their charges in public, the lictors would carry fasces as a symbol of state power.

[19] In Classical Rome, the fasces consisted of an axe embedded in a bundle of sticks held together by a band (see the cover of this volume), representing the power of the unified state, and was often carried in procession.

state power than the regime that preceded it — I mean, Fascism. The world of the true state can be properly criticized in the area of the so-called 'ethical state'. We have acknowledged a positive character in the conception of the state as a higher principle or power that gives form to the nation. We spoke a little earlier of the task of creating a given general climate. One of the chief aspirations of Fascism was also to be the principle of a new way of life. To the agnostic liberal democratic state, 'a mattress which people take turns using', Mussolini contrasted a state 'which necessarily transforms the people' — and he added, 'even in their physical aspect'.[20]

In all this the danger and temptation was present of direct, mechanical procedures precisely of the 'totalitarian' type. In fact, the essence of what we are dealing with should be thought of in terms analogous to what in chemistry is called catalytic action and in the Far East has the designation, which is only apparently paradoxical, of 'acting without acting', or acting by means of a spiritual influence, not with extrinsic and invasive measures. Anyone with a sufficient sensibility has to notice the opposition between this idea and the direction that belongs to the ethical state as conceived by a certain philosophy, represented essentially by Giovanni Gentile.[21] In this direction, the climate of a state descends to the level of the climate of a secondary school or a reform school, and its type of leader descends to the level of an officious and presumptuous pedagogue. So even if they refer to a particular domain, these words come from Mussolini himself: 'Do not think that the state, as we conceive it and want it to be, should take the citizen by the hand like a father takes his son's hand into his to lead him.' The relationships that exist between the sovereign and his subjects, and also between leaders and followers on the level of men and warriors, relationships based on free adherence and reciprocal respect, with non-interference in what is only personal and which falls outside of what is demanded objectively by the ends of common action, give a further example of opposite and positive action.

[20] Mussolini, Appendix to 'The Doctrine of Fascism'.

[21] Giovanni Gentile (1875-1944) was an Italian philosopher and educational reformer who was among the most important theoreticians and intellectual spokesmen of Fascism. He applied the Marxist/Hegelian dialectic to the idea of the state, believing that in Fascism the oppositions that comprised the various elements of the state were reconciled within the overarching unity of the state's authority. He was gunned down by anti-Fascist partisans in the Italian Social Republic on 15 April 1944. See A. James Gregor, Giovanni Gentile: Philosopher of Fascism (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2001).

Everything in Fascism that had the character of the state acting as a school teacher exercising pressure, not on the political and objective level, but on the level of one's personal moral life, as one of the aspects of 'totalitarianism', should be classed among the deviations of the system. Among all these deviations a typical example is the so-called Fascist 'Pronatalist Campaign',[22] which was odious even if it did not rest on an absurd principle, like the one that said, 'number is power', a principle contradicted by all history known to us, since 'numbers' have always been subjugated by small, dominating groups. Empires have been created by these groups, and not by a demographic overflow of masses of the dispossessed and pariahs flooding over the lands of the rich with no other right but their poverty and procreative incontinence. Apart from a similar misunderstanding of the meaning of 'number', it is an obvious fact that a demographic campaign in Italy, whose population was already excessive, would have been more absurd than in any other nation. In general, prejudices united to irresponsibility are an obstacle to recognising a point whose importance can never be emphasised energetically enough, that is, that the natural, frightening increase in the general population is one of the most basic factors in the crisis and social instability of modern times. When energetic measures from above appear truly necessary for the common good to limit this pandemic ill, and not exacerbate it (as with the Fascist demographic campaign), they should of course be taken.

Associated with this same aspect of the 'ethical state' in Fascism, that is the pseudo-pedagogical side, there was often a preoccupation for 'little morality' instead of a concern with 'great morality', especially in regard to the sexual life, with relevant public measures to repress and inhibit sex. This preoccupation was largely due to the bourgeois component of Fascism, and in its moralism, Fascism — this must be acknowledged — was not very different from a puritanical regime of the Christian Democratic[23] type. But ethos in the ancient sense is something rather different from morality as conceived by bourgeois morality. A 'warrior' culture — and Fascism's ambition was precisely to be the beginning of that kind of Italian culture — is never

[22] Between 1925 and 1938, the Fascist regime attempted to increase the Italian birthrate by offering economic incentives, such as tax breaks, to families that had more children, and generally attempted to glorify and honour childbirth. In spite of this, the campaign failed to increase the birthrate.

[23] Christian democracy is an ideology that emerged in Western Europe in the nineteenth century, and which resulted in Christian Democratic parties forming in several nations. It seeks to apply Christian ethics to social problems. Many of them are still active throughout Western Europe, South America and Australia today.

a 'moralistic' culture, or better, to use Vilfredo Pareto's[24] term, a culture of 'virtueism'.[25] Here, too, the liberty of the person must be respected, and we should aim at an ideal high tension, not any sort of 'moralising'.

These thoughts are already leading away from the field of the present considerations. The important point in general is the idea of action through prestige and an appeal to special forms of sensibility, vocation and the interests of individuals, an idea that ought to be part of a true state and its leaders. If the appeal finds no echo, little of what really matters can be attained in another way. A people and a nation will just float away or be reduced to a malleable mass in the hands of demagogues knowledgeable in the art of acting on the pre-personal and most primitive strata of human beings.

While we are discussing these issues critically, since the question of the concept of liberty has arisen, it will be a good idea to add an additional brief reflection on the sense that liberty can have in a state based not on the social contract, but on human will, as the Fascist state wanted to be.

Plato said something that we have already cited on other occasions, that it is a good idea for the person who does not have a sovereign within to have one outside. This insight leads us to distinguish a positive liberty from the purely negative, that is external, liberty which can be equally enjoyed by someone who, although free in respect to others, is not free in respect to himself, that is, in respect to the naturalistic part of his own being. We should add to this the well-known distinction between being free *from* something and being free *for* something (for a given task or a given function). In one of our recent works[26] we indicated that the principal cause of the existential crisis of contemporary man was precisely the attainment of a 'negative' liberty, with which, in the end, one does not know what to do, given the lack of sense and the absurdity of modern society. In truth, personality and liberty can be conceived only on the basis of the individual's freeing himself, to a certain degree, from the naturalistic, biological and primitively individualist bonds that characterise the pre-state and pre-political forms in a purely social, utilitarian and contractual sense. Then it is possible to conceive that the true state, the state characterised by the 'transcendence' of the political level that we have discussed, furnishes a propitious

[24] Vilfredo Pareto (1844-1923) was an Italian sociologist whose theories were highly influential upon Italian Fascism.

[25] Pareto discusses virtueism in his principal work, The Mind and Society (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1935).

[26] Julius Evola, Ride the Tiger.

environment for the development of personality and true liberty in the sense of *virtus*,[27] according to the Classical understanding. With its climate of high tension, it issues a continual appeal to the individual to carry himself beyond himself, beyond simple vegetative life. Obviously everything depends on giving appropriate and just reference points to encourage this impulse, so that the effect is really 'anagogical', that is, drawing upward. (For this, let us say in passing, it is absolutely inadequate to offer as a reference point an abstract 'common good' that reflects, in magnified form, the same 'individual good' conceived in material terms.) Once the mistake of 'totalitarianism' has been eliminated, it is therefore important to reject in the clearest way the accusation that a political system based on authority is, in principle, incompatible with the values of the person and suffocates liberty. The liberty that is experienced as negative is only an insipid liberty, formless, small and basically of little interest, and all the arguments for a 'new humanism' offered by intellectuals and litterateurs with no centre are futile against this fundamental truth.

To avoid any misunderstanding, and returning to what we have mentioned a little earlier about the art of demagogues, it is, however, necessary to acknowledge explicitly that next to the 'anagogic' possibility there is the 'catagogic' one (heading downward). There exists, that is, the possibility within the individual for 'self-transcending', escaping from himself by subordinating his own bonds and more immediate interests, in a direction that is not ascending, but rather descending. This is what happens in 'mass states', in collectivising and demagogic movements with an excitable and sub-rational foundation, which can also give to the individual the illusory, momentary sensation of an exalted, intense life, likewise conditioned by sensation, by a regression, and by a reduction of personality and true liberty. There is no lack of cases in which it is difficult to distinguish one possibility from the other, since the two phenomena can even present themselves as mixed. But what we have said furnishes some clear reference points to provide a way to prevent tendentious attempts to attribute validity to arguments against the political system we are trying to identify by means of positive and traditional elements (even when these elements remain in the phase of demands and aspirations), since these arguments can be valid only against a system of a completely different type. We have already spoken of the absurdity of positing parallels when speaking of Leftist totalitarianism. To use the

[27] Latin: 'virtue'. In the Roman world, virtus referred to one's masculine qualities, which were identified with honour, courage and service to the people and the state. To the Romans, virtus was something that could only be had in the public sphere; using these same qualities in the pursuit of a personal goal was not respected.

term totalitarianism correctly, the substantial difference could be briefly expressed by saying that totalitarianism of the Right is 'anagogic', while that of the Left is 'catagogic', and that only because both are equally opposed to the limited and hollow regime of the bourgeois individual could a myopic mindset think that they have anything in common.

V

We can reasonably affirm that a true Right without the monarchy ends up deprived of its natural centre of gravity and crystallisation, because in almost all traditional states the principal reference point for realizing the independent and stable principle of pure political authority has been the crown. [NOTE: On the meaning and function of monarchy, compare our essay with this title[1] in Karl Loewenstein's *La monarchia nello Stato moderno*.[2]] If this were the appropriate place, we could demonstrate this point with a series of historical considerations. This insight is particularly valid for the recent past, because those regimes that, although presenting to some degree a regular traditional character, did not have a monarchical structure or a parallel type of leadership, owed their traditional character to situations that belonged to the distant past. For instance, aristocratic and oligarchic republics that existed in other times would be inconceivable in the climate of societies from more recent times, where they would end up being immediately denatured.

Returning, then, to what we said at the beginning about the situation in which a Right generally takes form, we can say that its principal function ought to correspond to a certain degree to that of the system that was previously characterised by a particular loyalty to the crown, since the custodianship of the idea of the state and of authority resided with the crown, even in the context of a constitutional monarchy with a representative system of the modern type ('authoritarian constitutionalism').

So it is appropriate for our purposes to undertake a rapid examination of the relationships that existed between Fascism and the monarchy.

The Fascism of the Twenty Years from 1922 until 1943 was monarchical. On the significance and dignity of the monarchy there exist explicit and unambiguous statements by Mussolini that allow the establishment of a connection between the monarchical principle and the new dignity claimed for the state by Fascism, as well as between Fascism and the principle of stability and continuity by which Mussolini sometimes referred to the state, while at others, more vaguely and mythologically, to the 'stock'. To quote him, Mussolini defined the monarchy in terms of 'a supreme synthesis of national values' and 'a fundamental element of national unity'.

[1] Julius Evola, 'Significato e funzione della monarchia'.

[2] Karl Loewenstein, La monarchia nello stato moderno (Rome: Volpa, 1969).

Republican tendencies (largely in sympathy with socialist ones) were present in Fascism before the March on Rome in October 1922. If eliminating these tendencies should be considered an essential aspect of the process of purifying, dignifying and 'Romanising' Fascism, we have to conceive the return to republicanism of the second Fascism, the Fascism of the Salò Republic, which preferred to proclaim itself 'social', almost in terms of those regressions due to trauma that are often observed by psychopathology. Mussolini's legitimate resentment, and the human, contingent and dramatic factors that acted in those circumstances, can also be adequately acknowledged, but they cannot show in other terms the nature of the phenomenon, if we hold to the level of pure political and institutional values. Therefore, from our point of view, in this respect there is nothing to be gathered from the Fascism of the Italian Social Republic.

Originally Mussolini did not 'seize' power, but received it from the King, and under the conformist institutional garb of entrusting the government to him there was the equivalent of a sort of completely legal investiture. Because of successive developments, for the Fascism of the Twenty Years it was possible to speak of a 'dyarchy', that is, the coexistence of the monarchy with a dictatorship. The prominence the second term enjoyed has allowed the current enemies of the past regime to speak simply of the 'Fascist dictatorship', virtually cancelling out the other term, that is, the role of the monarchy, almost as if it was without any significance.

Criticisms animated by a different spirit have been directed at the system of the 'dyarchy'. On the one hand, there are those who thought they saw in the respect accorded to the monarchy a mistake or defect in the revolutionary force of Mussolini's movement (neglecting, however, to indicate precisely what was supposed to be the true outcome of this movement). The truth is, rather, that if there had been a true monarchy in Italy, a monarchy as a power committed to intervene energetically in every situation of crisis and collapse in the state, and not as a simple symbol of sovereignty, Fascism would have never arisen; there would have been no 'revolution'. The critical situation in which the nation found itself before the March on Rome would have been overcome exclusively and rapidly through a 'revolution from above' (with a possible suspension of constitutional encumbrances), which is the only admissible revolution in a traditional regime, and through a successive reorganisation of structures that had proven ineffective. Since that was not the situation in Italy, other paths had to be followed. It can be said that the sovereign had Mussolini and Fascism accomplish, within certain limits, the 'revolution from above', perhaps because he thought in this way to preserve the principle of 'neutrality', of 'reigning

without governing', that had been formulated for the monarch in the final period of liberal constitutionalism.[3]

In terms of pure doctrine, it cannot be said that the dyarchic situation that resulted was necessarily a compromise and something hybrid. Dyarchy can also have a traditional chrism based on precise precedents. A typical example in this regard is the dictatorship as it was originally conceived in ancient Rome, not as a 'revolutionary' institution but as one contemplated by the legitimate and pre-existing system of order, essentially destined to integrate it in case of necessity so that an emergency situation, or the opportunity offered by a particular concentration and activation of existing forces might last. In addition, various traditional constitutions, and not only in Europe, have known dualities that were analogous to that of *rex*[4] and *dux*,[5] or of *rex* and *heretigo* or *imperator*[6] (especially in the military sense of the second term). The first term incarnates the pure, sacred and intangible principle of sovereignty and authority, the second presents itself as someone who, in tempestuous times, or in view of special tasks or ventures, received extraordinary powers in an exposed situation, powers that are not appropriate for the *rex*, because of the character of his higher function. Unlike the *rex*, being *dictator* required the quality of a specially endowed personality, since he could not draw his own authority from a purely symbolic function, *ex officio*,[7] with an 'Olympian'[8] character, so to speak.

[3] King Charles Albert of Piedmont-Sardinia, the predecessor to the monarchs of the Italian Kingdom that were to arise later, negotiated the Albertine Statute in 1848, which became the constitution of unified Italy in later years. In an attempt to stem the tide of revolutionary sentiment building in Italy, the Statute established a parliament and limited the powers of the monarch.

[4] Latin: 'king'.

[5] Latin: 'duke'.

[6] Latin: 'commander', a title in the Roman Republic.

[7] Latin: 'by the right of one's office'.

[8] Meaning, ruling with authority derived from the deities.

In less distant times, particular figures like Richelieu,[9] Metternich[10] and Bismarck,[11] who stood at the side of their sovereigns, reproduced again, in part, this dual situation. In this light, *mutatis mutandis*,[12] as a matter of principle there would not be much to object to against the 'dyarchy' of the Fascist period. On the other hand, Mussolini's dignity would not have been diminished if his activity had been limited to that of a loyal great Chancellor. In fact, on one side this was largely the function he exercised until the Empire[13] was created, not by him, but by the King of Italy.[14] It was up to the monarchy to be more or less jealous of his specific prerogatives (or more precisely of those that would have been natural for him in the new state) in this factual situation. In the system of 'authoritarian constitutionalism' that existed in the Second Reich of Germany, Wilhelm II[15] did not hesitate to fire Bismarck, the 'Iron Chancellor', creator of the unity and new-found power of Germany. Bismarck undertook initiatives that the King did not approve of, which still allowed Bismarck to be honoured as a hero and as the greatest statesman of the German nation.

Since we are occupied here essentially with doctrine, it is no part of our task to express a value judgment on the way the crisis of the 'dyarchy' happened when things in Italy took a turn for the worse, essentially as a result of violence because of the

[9] Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642) was a French Cardinal who served as the chief minister to King Louis XIII. He played an important role in centralising the power of the monarchy, quelling domestic unrest, and in France's part in the Thirty Years' War.

[10] Prince Klemens Wenzel von Metternich (1773-1859) was an Austrian statesman who was one of the most important European diplomats of the nineteenth century. He was involved in the negotiation of the Treaty of Paris in 1814, which marked the end of the Napoleonic Wars. At the Congress of Vienna in 1815, he was instrumental in establishing the new map of Europe, and the balance of power between the Great Powers which was to last, more or less intact, until the First World War. Although he was generally a reactionary, he did believe that the Austro-Hungarian Empire needed to protect equal rights for all its ethnic groups, and even proposed the creation of a parliament to this end, but he was unable to enact such reforms. He was forced to resign during the Revolution of 1848.

[11] Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) was the Prussian leader who unified the German states into one nation during the 1860s, leading to his becoming the first Chancellor of the German Empire in 1871.

[12] Latin: 'necessary changes having been made'.

[13] Although Italy had had colonial holdings for many years prior, the Italian Empire was proclaimed on 9 May 1936 following the conquest of Ethiopia.

[14] In 1936, after the defeat of Ethiopia, King Vittorio Emanuele III proclaimed himself to be the Emperor of Ethiopia.

[15] Wilhelm II (1859-1941) was the Kaiser of the German Empire from 1888 until he abdicated the throne following the collapse of Germany in 1918, at the end of the First World War. He dismissed Bismarck in 1890, due to his disagreement with the Kaiser's intention of granting more rights to the workers.

unfortunate events of the war.[16] Strictly, that is, from the purely juridical point of view, there is little to object to in the conduct of Vittorio Emanuele III.[17] We can even admit the existence of a palace conspiracy headed by Acquarone,[18] Badoglio[19] and others. Formally, Mussolini presented himself to the King as the head of Fascism, to whom the chief assembly of his movement, the Fascist Grand Council,[20] had denied their confidence and who, designated by the King as the head of the government, was now ready to hand in his resignation. It was too easy, however, for the sovereign to retreat to abstract constitutional prerogatives, as though nothing had happened in the meantime, and employ the liberal constitutional caricature of the King's non-responsibility. Something different should have intervened, that is, the bond of loyalty, which was unwritten but more real for precisely that reason. The act was carried out by a sovereign who, after all, had agreed to modifying his dynasty's coat of arms, as the official emblem of the Kingdom of Italy, by the addition of the lictors' fasces — a clear and sufficient expression of the integrative convergence that had characterised the Twenty Years — and who in that period had allowed the authority of the state to be raised not by a Right — which did not exist — but by Fascism.

This is not the place to judge the treatment to which Mussolini was subjected, nor regarding the way the King kept faith with the declaration, 'The war goes on',[21] nor on the events that followed. We must, however, acknowledge that, faced

[16] Following the successful Allied invasion of Sicily in July 1943, and knowing that an invasion of the Italian mainland was imminent, the King summoned Mussolini to his palace following the vote against him by the Fascist Grand Council, dismissed him as Prime Minister, and then had him arrested, on 25 July 1943.

[17] Vittorio Emanuele III (1869-1947) was the King of Italy from 1890 until 1946, and during the entirety of the Fascist era.

[18] Count Pietro Acquarone was a wealthy financier who had begun serving as a minister in 1939. He was instrumental in helping to organise the coup against Mussolini, on the instructions of the King.

[19] Pietro Badoglio (1871-1956) was a general in Mussolini's army. He was appointed Prime Minister by the King following Mussolini's overthrow, and held the position until June 1944. During the war against Ethiopia in 1935, Badoglio had ordered the use of poison gas, and also had his men fire on Red Cross ambulances. He was never put on trial for war crimes, however, since the British regarded him as being reliably anti-Communist.

[20] The Fascist Grand Council was created by Mussolini for the Party in 1923, and then instituted as an organ of government in 1928. The Council retained the power to appoint all major Party positions, to elect the King's successor, and to recommend to the King that the Prime Minister (Mussolini) be removed from office. This was done on 25 July 1943, although Mussolini did not recognise their authority to do so.

[21] Initially, largely out of fear of the large numbers of German forces still present in northern Italy, Badoglio, on orders from the King, insisted that Italy would continue to fight on the side of the Axis

with all this, those who held that their bond of loyalty to the sovereign had been dissolved and went on to serve the second Fascism can claim an undeniable legitimacy for their behaviour. Equally, we can understand that an all-too-human resentment should have pushed Mussolini towards what history inauspiciously presents so many examples of, to the greater glory of subversion: legitimately taking sides against a person who stretches or arbitrarily changes the principle of which he is only the representative — in the present case, the monarchy. Hence Mussolini's proclamation of the Republic, and, more to the point, a republic called 'social', which we have already compared to the degenerative regressions that are often found in the aftermath of psychic trauma in the individual.

[NOTE: Mussolini proclaimed the Republic—obviously as a result of the force of the sentiments that had built up in him in the semi-detention in which the new government had held him after July 25[22]—by direct personal initiative, without consulting anyone. We can attest this because we were in Hitler's general headquarters at Rastenburg when Mussolini arrived there,[23] just after he was liberated by Otto Skorzeny.[24] He immediately met with some Fascist leaders who were there (we were present), with whom he made no reference to the institutional problem. He sent them away at about 9:00 PM. The next morning, towards 8:00 AM, without having talked with anyone, he prefaced the first order of the day with the proclamation of the Republic. We probably should not exclude the influence of Hitler, whom Mussolini saw upon his arrival and before meeting with us. In fact, Hitler had a significant contempt for monarchy in general that was, in fact, incompatible with

despite the removal of Mussolini from office. Secret negotiations with the Allies began, however, leading to an armistice on September 3. The armistice was made public on September 8, to the surprise of the Italian armed forces.

[22] Following his arrest, Mussolini was held captive, in secret, at the Campo Imperatore Hotel, a ski resort in the Apennine Mountains.

[23] Evola discusses his activities during this period at greater length in The Path of Cinnabar (London: Arktos, 2009).

[24] Otto Skorzeny (1908-1975) was a famed Obersturmbannführer in the Waffen SS during the Second World War. Having determined the location where Mussolini was being held, he was part of a unit, led by Major Harald Mors, who used gliders to attack the hotel, liberate Mussolini and bring him to Germany on 12 September 1943. He remained active after 1945, helping fugitive Nazis through the ODESSA network, and also working with various neo-Fascist groups around the world, and especially in Argentina, in the hope of reviving Fascism. He also created the Paladin Group in 1970, which offered paramilitary training. He counted South Africa, Franco's Spain, the Greek military junta, Libyan Col. Gaddafi, and various Palestinian nationalist groups among Paladin's clients.

the *Führer* principle to which we shall return later. We were in Austria at the time of the *Anschluss*[25] and in the following period. We ought to say that what the Nazi *Gauleiter*[26] for Austria was capable of saying in his speeches against the Habsburgs[27] was of a vulgarity in no way inferior to that of a Jacobin[28] or Communist proletarian.]

As a result, through the chain of successive events that in, a certain way, had the character of Nemesis,[29] the monarchy in Italy was doomed to end[30] without even the glimmer of greatness and of tragedy.

[25] The Anschluss (German: 'union') refers to the annexation of Austria, and its subsequent incorporation into the Third Reich, by Germany in March 1938.

[26] A Gauleiter was the National Socialist Party leader for a specific region of the Reich. Evola is probably referring to Baldur von Schirach, who was the Gauleiter of Vienna from 1940 until 1945.

[27] The Habsburg monarchy was one of the most important royal families of Europe, providing the monarchs for many of its empires. The last Habsburg monarch was Charles I of Austria, who abdicated in 1918 following the Austria-Hungarian Empire's defeat in the First World War.

[28] The Jacobin Club, a political group in eighteenth-century France, was one of the driving forces of the French Revolution. Since then, 'Jacobin' has often been used as a generic term for Left-wing radicals.

[29] Nemesis was the Hellenic god of retribution.

[30] In 1946, the Italian public's dissatisfaction with the government grew to the point that an election was called to determine whether or not the Kingdom of Italy and its royal family should be dissolved. King Vittorio Emanuele III abdicated in May, before the election, in favour of his son, Umberto II, hoping that a new monarch would help to alleviate the public's fears. This was unsuccessful, however, as the vote the following month still resulted in the dissolution of the Kingdom in favour of a republic, and the expulsion of the royal family from Italy.

VI

After this parenthesis concerning historical contingency, let us return to the structural examination of the Fascist regime. If, from our point of view, we do not believe that the 'dyarchy' represented an absurdity in principle, it is, however, possible to find fault with a more general dual situation in the whole structure, and, in regard to it, our judgment must be different. In fact, by its very nature, a revolutionary movement of the Right after a first phase ought to aim at re-establishing normality and unity on a new level through adequate processes of integration.

Therefore, in the first place, we should mention the hybrid character of the idea of the so-called 'one-party state',[1] insofar as it assumed the character of a permanent institution in the new state. In this regard, we must separate the positive instance that stood at the foundation of this idea and indicate in what more adequate context the Party should have acted after the conquest of power.

The true state — it is hardly necessary to say this — does not admit the rule of parties (*partitocrazia*) of democratic regimes. Parliamentary reform, which we shall talk about in a little while, undoubtedly represented one of the positive aspects of Fascism. However, the conception of a 'one-party state' is absurd. Because it belongs exclusively to the world of parliamentary democracy, it is only irrationally that the idea of a 'party' can be preserved in a regime opposed to everything that is democratic. Saying 'party', on the other hand, means saying part, and the concept of party implies that of a multiplicity, through which the sole party would be the part that wants to become the whole, in other words, the faction that eliminates all the others without, for all that, changing its nature and elevating itself to a higher level, precisely because it continues to consider itself as a party. Yesterday's Fascist Party of Italy, insofar as it gave itself a permanent institutional character, for that reason represented a kind of state within the state, with its own militia, federal police, Grand Council and all the rest, to the prejudice of a truly organic and monolithic system.

In the phase of the conquest of power, a party can have a fundamental importance as a crystallising centre of a movement, as its organisation and guide. After this initial phase its survival as a party beyond a certain period is absurd. We should not think of this in terms of 'normalisation' in the worst sense, with a

[1] The National Fascist Party became the sole party in Italy by law in 1928.

corresponding collapse of political and spiritual tension. The 'revolutionary' and innovative demand of Fascism placed the task of adequate action upon the substance of the nation in a way that was continuous, general and, in a certain way, pervasive. But then it is in a different form that the valid forces of a party ought to subsist, not to break up, but remain active: by inserting itself into the normal and essential hierarchies of the state and eventually controlling it, occupying key positions in it and constituting, more than an armed guard of the state, an elite that bears, to an eminent degree, the idea. In this last case, more than a 'party' it will be appropriate to speak of a kind of 'order'. This is the same function that in other times was exercised by the nobility as a political class, up to a relatively recent period of the Central European states.

Fascism was committed to maintaining itself as a 'party', for which there was, as we have said, a kind of duplication of government and political articulations. They were almost like superstructures that sustained and supported a building that lacked stability, in place of an organic synthesis and a symbiosis. The gap between party and state was not functionally overcome, for instance, with declaring — as it was declared — that the 'party' and the Fascist militia itself should be 'in the service of the nation'. This cannot be accepted as a valid element of the Fascist system, even if it is not legitimate to hypothesise the future in relation to the developments that the regime could have had if *force majeure*[2] had not provoked its collapse, and even if we must acknowledge the validity of the objection that the existence of forces which did not follow the new course, or followed it only passively, rendered every hasty evolution dangerous in the normalising, anti-dual sense we mentioned before. And what happened after twenty years of this regime is, in this regard, rather eloquent.

However, precisely in reference to this last point, we should mention the fact that the conception of the Fascist 'Party' was affected by its origins, that is, by the intrinsic solidarity of the concept of a party with the democratic idea, through the lack of a rigorously qualitative and selective criterion. Even after the conquest of power the Fascist party was committed to being a mass party. It opened itself up, instead of purifying itself. Instead of making membership in the Party appear a difficult privilege, the regime practically imposed it on everyone. Who is there who, yesterday, did not have the 'card'?[3] And, in addition, who could allow himself not to

[2] Latin: 'superior force', used in the case of something that is seen as being outside human control.

[3] Members of the National Fascist Party were issued an identity card. Evola never joined the Fascist Party (or any other). Evola penned an essay with the ironic title of 'Identity Card' in his short-lived journal La Torre in 1930, expressing his hopes and his reservations concerning Fascism.

have it if he wanted to perform certain activities? Hence the fatal consequence of countless superficial adherents, who were conformist or opportunistic, with effects that were immediately manifest at the moment of crisis. A retrospective counterproof was constituted by quite a few of yesterday's 'Fascists', not just private citizens, but writers and intellectuals who afterwards changed their colours, trying to put their past in the shadow, denying it, or declaring that they were, at that time, cynically in bad faith. The conception of 'party' in Communism and National Socialism, that was maintained also in those movements, had instead a rather more exclusive and selective character. In Fascism, on the other hand, the idea of a 'mass party' prevailed, prejudicing the positive function that the Party could eventually have continued to have. From our point of view, the positive outcome in conjunctions of this kind, the positive counterpart of the revolutionary concept of 'sole party' in a normalised and integrated institutional context, should instead be thought of in terms of a type of Order, the backbone of the state, participating, to a certain degree, in the authority and dignity that gathers — indivisible — at the top of the state.

This creation of an Order should have been the goal of a movement of national political renewal in the necessary passage from the phase of its conquest of power to the phase in which the same energy is manifested as a natural moving force, which forms and differentiates the human element. Generally, the 'Party's' remnants were obstacles for a complete and enthusiastic development of the Fascist regime in the sense of a true Right. On the practical level, they caused various destructive interferences, as when, on one hand, anyone who had been in the Party, especially during its activist and insurrectional phase (for instance, having been Fascist toughs, *squadristi*),[4] was considered adequate for tasks and functions that needed special qualifications and competence, or even a nearly 'Fascist' mental attitude. On the other hand, the Party was happy to accept men with a certain reputation if they gave their adhesion to Fascism, without caring too much if their adhesion was only formal, and even if they were really agnostic in attitude, or even downright anti-Fascists (as was the case for quite a few members of the Royal Academy of Italy,[5] which was founded by Fascism).

[4] Squadristi was the Italian name for the Blackshirts, the paramilitary arm of the Fascist Party. The squadristi were instrumental to Mussolini's assumption of power in the March on Rome in 1922.

[5] The Royal Academy of Italy was established by royal decree in 1926, in imitation of the French Academy. It was dissolved in 1943 with the end of the Fascist Party, although a rump version of it existed in the Italian Social Republic, until its defeat.

VII

We cannot pass by in silence a further negative aspect of the system, one that is related to the unresolved or insufficiently integrated dualities we have just pointed out, because unfortunately it has received a great deal of attention in the mythologising of Fascism. So much so, in fact, that unless we pay careful attention to the elements in the system that can be separated from unique historical contingencies, this aspect can seem to constitute one of its most essential characteristics. We are dealing with the phenomenon of the cult of the leader (*ducismo*) represented by Mussolini when we consider in him the quality, conserved inside the system, of the head of a movement and a party, his aiming at a prestige that bordered almost on the tribunician and Napoleonic, the emphasis on his person *per se*; the inclination which was, if not demagogic, at least somewhat democratic, to 'go to the people', not to despise the applause of the *piazza*. After so many 'oceanic' public meetings in front of the Palazzo Venezia,[1] these same people paid him back with a worthy response in 1945.

[NOTE: In general one cannot ascribe as a positive point for Mussolini some statements in which, in open contradiction to many others, instead of absolutely rejecting any idea of democracy, he was almost competing to claim for Fascism the title of 'true' democracy (just as every party in Italy does today, including the Communist Party, and unfortunately some members of Parliament considered neo-Fascist): 'If there has ever been in history a regime of democracy, that is, a people's state, it is ours' (speech given at Perugia on 6 October 1926). And a few years later: 'If there is a country where true democracy has been realised, that country is Fascist Italy' (speech given in Milan on 1 November 1936).]

There is an obvious inconsistency between this aspect of Mussolini, on the one hand, and, on the other, his doctrine of the state and statements like the well-known ones in the speech he delivered at Udine in September 1922: 'I do not worship the new divinity, the masses. It is a creation of democracy and socialism.'[2]

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[1] The Palazzo Venezia is a palace in the centre of Rome where Mussolini had an office. He gave speeches from its balcony.

[2] Benito Mussolini, Mussolini: As Revealed in His Political Speeches, November 1914-August 1923 (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1923), p. 148.

This emphasis should not seem contradictory in respect to what we have said above about the particular personal qualities and the prestige that a *dux* per se, in his special function, must possess. But here the question arises which we discussed concerning the subject of the specifically 'anagogic' climate to be created in every state of the traditional type. This kind of climate cannot be obtained with lively activities that, while they can reach a level of fanaticism and collective enthusiasm in certain cases, are still based on the sub-personal aspects of man as mass-man and on the art of stirring people up against any other possible form of individual reaction. We must be mindful that, as intense as the magnetism created in this way can be, all the same it does not cease to have an ephemeral character, profoundly different from what can derive from the formative force from above of a true tradition. The mass that can be formed in this way is comparable to the adhesion of so many metal particles attracted by a magnet. When, however, the current that generates the magnetic force field fails, instantaneously all the metal particles drop off the magnet and are scattered in an ephemeral quantity, demonstrating how contingent the preceding state of formless aggregation was. It is in these terms that we should explain most of what happened in Italy and still more in Germany when events destroyed — to continue to use our simile — the current that generated the magnetic field.

Naturally, we may wonder to what degree different techniques of aggregation can be effective today, since the contemporary world is substantially a world of the mass-man. In fact, there is no real, qualitative difference between the phenomenon we are now discussing, which some people would like to make exclusively the fault of certain forms of dictatorship, and, on the other hand, everything that we find present in the political world of anti-Fascist democracy, with its methods of propaganda and demagogy, its 'heap of experts', and the fabrication of 'public opinion'. But granted the validity of this objection and the consequences that can be drawn from it for politics as a mere 'art of the possible' of a more or less Machiavellian type, it does not touch the realm of principles and structures, which is the only one that interests us. For the distinction we are dealing with here, one point is of fundamental importance. Today no one pays attention to it, but there exists a clear chasm between the natural authority of a real leader and an authority based on an amorphous power, and the capacity or art we have talked about of arousing the emotional and irrational forces of the masses, under the influence of an exceptional individual. To clarify, we shall say that in a traditional system, people obey or become

rabble or subjects on the basis of what Nietzsche called the 'pathos of distance',[3] that is, because they feel they are confronting someone who is almost of a different nature. In today's world, where the people have been transformed into a mob and mass, obedience is based at most on a 'pathos of nearness', that is, upon equality. People only put up with the leader who is, essentially, 'one of us', who is 'one of the people', who expresses the 'will of the people', who is a 'good friend'. The cult of the leader in the worse sense, as it was affirmed especially in Hitlerism and Stalinism ('the cult of the personality' goes back all the way to Carlyle's confused concept of 'heroes',[4] more or less de-romanticised), corresponds to this second orientation, which is anti-traditional and incompatible with the ideals and *ethos* of the true Right.

[NOTE: It is significant, from a lowering of standards and in order to 'follow the times', as they say, that 'becoming one of the people', and renouncing the prestige of distance, is found not only in the case of sovereigns and members of the nobility that still survive, but also in the religious sphere, as in the behaviour of recent popes, who have identified themselves as 'one of the people'.][5] In a certain way we are led back here to what we have pointed out in talking about the reference points that differentiate a traditional system from those that can be distinguished in a system that has a generally 'authoritarian' character. The essential element is constituted by the nature and foundations of the authority, and consequently also by the general existential situation that corresponds to it. Therefore we can say that in the Fascist regime, what was present institutionally as a dyarchy, or in the other dualities we have mentioned, had an internal counterpart which expressed itself in the coexistence of two distinct centres for rousing the national movement. One presented a populist character that favoured the cult of the leader, and so, despite everything, was basically

[3] 'Nobody is courageous enough for special privileges these days, for the rights of the masters, for feelings of self-respect and respect among equals – for a pathos of distance […] Our politics is sick from this lack of courage!' From Friedrich Nietzsche, The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 40. Nietzsche also discusses the 'pathos of distance' in Beyond Good and Evil, section 257, and in On the Genealogy of Morals, section 1.2.

[4] Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) was a Scottish writer who was extremely influential in the nineteenth century. His book, On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History (1841), portrays human history as being driven by extraordinary individuals.

[5] At the time Evola was writing, the reigning Pope was Paul VI, who as an archbishop gained notoriety for preaching to the workers in Milan, which was a centre of Communism, and earned the title 'archbishop of the workers'. He assumed the Papacy during the Vatican II conference, which was the watershed of liberalisation in the Catholic Church. It is also interesting to note that Pope John Paul II was frequently hailed as being 'a man of the people'.

democratic (after all, we know how often Mussolini favoured a kind of consensus, even when it was clear that it was prefabricated and compulsory) and this democratic residue was often active in the structures of the Party as well.

[NOTE: This observation is relevant to the Fascist Grand Council, insofar as it introduced the democratic principle of voting to its members. Perhaps on 25 July 1943, some of them had organised a conspiracy, which was confirmed by what was being prepared in the circles around the royal family. It was, however, really absurd first to concede the right of a free vote to the members of the Grand Council, and then accuse them of treason and haul them before a court when the majority used this right. If the Grand Council had had the character of a simple advisory body in principle, on 25 July Mussolini could have ignored its majority vote.]

The importance of the democratic element is explained, however, by the weakness of the other centre, the monarchy, with all that could be relevant to a traditional line. So once more we are compelled to acknowledge what prejudiced the system: the weakness of the liberal state that preceded it. But the animating force generated by a different source, namely Fascism, which was the only one capable of elevating the Italian state, gave rise to an ambiguous element on the other hand, because of the (for many reasons) problematic nature of this source. Once more, however, all of this belongs to the field of historical contingency.

It is undeniable that Mussolini was influenced, aside from some of Nietzsche's views, by the theories of Oswald Spengler[6] in those places where he predicted a new era of 'great individuals' of the 'caesarean' type (simplifying, somewhat illegitimately, the complex figure of Julius Caesar),[7] who was destined to succeed the epoch of the democracies. It seems, however, that Mussolini, who must have felt that he was one of these figures, had not paid much attention to the fact that, in Spengler's system, the new 'caesarism', which was very close to 'ducism', in the inferior sense we have discussed, belongs morphologically and situationally to the dark close of a cultural

[6] Oswald Spengler (1880-1936) was a German philosopher who is regarded as one of the principal Conservative Revolutionary figures of the Weimar period in Germany. His most important work was his two volume 1918/23 book The Decline of the West in which he theorised that all civilisations go through an inevitable cycle of ages of rise and decline in power, with the West currently entering its declining period.

[7] Gaius Julius Caesar (100 BC-44 BC) was originally a Roman military commander who seized control of the Roman Republic after waging a civil war, becoming its dictator and transforming the Republic into the Roman Empire.

cycle (to the phase of *Zivilization*,[8] which is opposed to the preceding phase of *Kultur*,[9] that is, of a qualitative, differentiated and organic culture, according to Spengler's terminology). It belonged to the sunset, and specifically to the famous 'Sunset of the West', for which in itself, and apart from the character of inevitability that Spengler thought he could recognise, should not be considered a positive phenomenon. To be positive, it would need to be corrected by means of a superior tradition and a diverse chrism. On the practical level, it is anyhow inconceivable that one epoch after the other would follow in direct continuity and at the same level of 'great individuals'. In Italy, the existing possibilities gave rise to an equilibrium or temporary reconciliation with some positive aspects, up to the point where the monarchical Fascism of the Twenty Years found itself subjected to a hard test of strength.

Once these necessary considerations have been made, it behooves us to separate another component in the complex unity of Fascism that, in principle, was of a different spirit, in contrast to everything that stands under the banner of the masses and the screaming leaders of the masses. We are referring to the *military* component of Fascism.

These are the words of Mussolini: 'We are becoming more and more a military nation, because we want it. Since we are not afraid of words, we shall add: militaristic. To finish: a warrior nation, that is, endowed in an always higher degree with the virtues of obedience, sacrifice, and dedication' (1934). Before this he had already said (1925), 'Everyone should consider himself a soldier, a soldier even when he is not wearing the grey-green uniform, a soldier even when he works, at the office, at the factory, in the dockyards or on the farm, a soldier linked to all the rest of the army.' On this topic, the reservation we need to make concerns 'militarism'. In addition, we must distinguish between 'military' and 'paramilitary'. The second term can be applied to certain formations that supported the Party in the preceding period, but which were not carefully chosen. As for a certain militarising of existence and the soldier as a general symbol, from our point of view, the traditional point of view of the Right, there is little to object to, once we emphasise in this regard that we are dealing essentially with a style of behaviour, an ethic, that can also have an

[8] German: 'civilisation'.

[9] German: 'culture'. In The Path of Cinnabar, p. 204, Evola described Spengler's concepts of culture and civilisation as follows: 'the first term describes the aspects or phases of a qualitative, organic, differentiated and living civilisation, and the latter, those of a rationalistic, urban, mechanistic, shapeless and dispirited one'.

autonomous value, independently of obligatory military ends. The 'military' training in its positive, living aspects, not what the soldier learns in the 'barracks', must correct everything that can proceed from states of irrational and emotional aggregation by a 'mob' and the 'people ', which we have spoken of earlier. Fascism tried to instil into the Italian people one of the qualities with which, because of its individualism, it was and is less furnished: discipline and love of discipline. In addition, Fascism saw the 'dangers of the bourgeois spirit', and despised 'the stagnation of a vapid existence'. The 'military' orientation had to appear in a natural connection with the political one according to the antithesis, which we emphasised earlier, with which this element stood in respect to the 'social' one. The military style is that of an active and anti-rhetorical depersonalisation. When it is established, it is the most important factor of stability for a political and social organism, just as the army and the monarchy, in their mutual solidarity, have always constituted the essential pillars of the true state before the revolution of the Third Estate, democracy and liberalism. Primo de Rivera[10] could speak of an 'ascetic and military sense of life'.[11] This is a reference point of indubitable value and a touchstone of possible vocations for its adherents. Its antithesis is the climate of the so-called 'culture of affluence' or 'consumer culture', with its spiritually suffocating activity that creates multiple forms of 'protests'.

An essential aspect of the military ethic is the conception and sense of service as honour. It is superfluous to speak of the value this has in the sphere of political and social life. As is known, Fascism introduced the wearing of uniforms for state functionaries, resuming a tradition already existing in other countries, for instance Prussia and Russia. Essentially it was supposed to serve as a symbol to overcome the bureaucratic spirit and to dignify the bureaucracy. To the grey and squalid type of bureaucrat, who dodges every responsibility, for whom service to the state has more or less the same significance as being an employee in a commercial firm or a private business with his eye only on his paycheque and, even more, on his retirement pension (which, before the recent extension of the social security system, was envisioned almost exclusively for public employees), there came to be opposed the type of functionary for whom service to the state was, before anything else, an honour, presupposing, basically, a special vocation, almost as the counterpart to the honour of serving under the nation's flag. To the regressive direction of the bureaucratising of military life, it was possible to contrast the development of

[10] José Antonio Primo de Rivera (1903-1936) founded the Spanish nationalist party, the Falange, in 1933. In 1936, he was arrested and executed by the Spanish republican government.

[11] From 'What the Falange Wants', a speech originally delivered in Madrid in 1933.

'militarisation' as a means of de-bureaucratising the bureaucracy, this real cancer of democratic and republican states. The uniform of the public functionary could appear, as we have said, precisely as a symbol or a ritual. Lastly, we wanted to indicate the opposite of what belongs to a mechanistic totalitarian system with an example and a simile and, as well, the opposite of the tiresome pseudo-pedagogy or moralism of the so-called 'ethical state'.

The Blackshirts, the rough, woolen uniforms and all the rest are not really part of this development. They are rather part of what in Fascism often had a burlesque or contrived character, which developed out of the the incoherent dualities we discussed out of a faulty sense of due measure and of limits. This is the cause of the ease with which both positive and negative elements mingled in cases that cannot be examined here, because they are part of the realm of contingency.

For the same reason it is not appropriate to consider here Fascism's 'militarism', of which we have seen that Mussolini spoke, because he 'was not afraid of words'[12] (although he was perhaps a little carried away by words). In fact, on many other occasions he preferred to speak of a 'strong nation', which is not necessarily the same as a 'militaristic nation'. Naturally, a strong nation has to build its military's potential for warfare, use it when necessary and win the respect of other nations. The nation can consider the possibility of attack and not just defence, depending on the circumstances. That, however, is not a reason for thinking of everything in its 'militaristic' role. The truth is that in the polemic oriented in a democratic and 'social' direction, it makes sense to confuse 'military' with 'militarist'. The real attack is directed against those general values that are not necessarily connected with war, which we have indicated earlier and that include in the first place discipline, the sense of honour, an active impersonality, responsible relationships, command and obedience, a distaste for gossip and 'discussions', a manly solidarity having at its base true liberty — liberty for doing something, something worthwhile that brings you beyond a bourgeois existence that is 'prosperous' and vegetative, not to mention the proletarian existence of the 'state of labour'.[13]

Italy has been liberated in the first place from that heavy burden that appeared to a good part of the Italian people, because of their unhappy dispositions, to be the

[12] Mussolini said this in a speech to the Italian General Staff, while discussing Italy's increasing militarisation, on 28 August 1934, quoted in C. J. Lowe & F. Marzari, Italian Foreign Policy 1870-1940 (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 400.

[13] The Fascists sometimes referred to their regime as the 'state of labour', implying that it was primarily a workers' state. This became an even greater ideal in the post-Fascist Republic of Italy.

task of a high tension and a discipline or ethics of a 'military' type that had been laid before them, admittedly in forms that were at times debatable. It is only natural that, in such a 'liberated' nation, those values of a preceding tradition that now survive almost exclusively in the army, and even there in a rather attenuated form, should be systematically threatened and discredited. So-called 'conscientious objectors', who appear in droves, are now treated with 'humane' understanding and, following the absurd ideology of Nuremberg,[14] we sanction the right — no, rather the duty — of soldiers and public officials to refuse to obey orders, and to break their sworn fidelity whenever their own personal opinion suggests it, since the idea of the state should no longer mean anything to them.

[14] At the trials of the surviving members of the leadership of the Third Reich which were held in Nuremberg, Germany following the Second World War, many of those accused of 'war crimes' and 'crimes against humanity' defended their actions by claiming that they had only been following the orders given by their superiors. The London Charter was enacted to counter this defense by saying that a soldier can be held accountable for his actions, and that he has a moral obligation to disobey an order that he knows to be unlawful.

VIII

The crisis that Fascism had to confront in the period of the 'Aventine' secession (1924)[1] was a propitious occasion for overcoming the compromise solution represented by the first coalition government. Fascism found itself compelled to confront fully the institutional problem that concerned the representative system and the principle of government. Here, too, doctrine did not precede practice. It was only after various developments that the parliamentary reform was outlined and established in terms of the new corporative[2] Parliament.

'The Chamber of Deputies is now anachronistic even in its very name', Mussolini said in 1933. 'It is an institution that we found, and is foreign to our mentality.' It 'presupposes a world that we have demolished; it presupposes the plurality of parties and the frequent and willing attack on diligence. From the day we abolished this plurality, the Chamber of Deputies lost the essential motive for which it arose'. Mussolini believed that the parliamentary system, 'the product of a definite movement of ideas, as a representative system, is an institution that is now exhausted in its historical cycle'. Inseparably connected with democracy, the parliamentary system in Italy (but also in other states, especially France) had sunk to a level where the politician had been replaced by the party hack, where everyone could see a system of incompetence, corruption and irresponsibility, and where no stability was assured to the state, giving it the character of an 'empty state', that is, one lacking a substantial centre removed from contingencies. All this indicated the absurdity of the system to Mussolini's eyes.

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[1] The Aventine secession refers to the banning of the Socialist Party in 1925, which occurred after a politician from the Italian Socialist Party, Giacomo Matteotti, was killed by Fascists shortly after accusing them of committing fraud in the national elections. The Socialists then boycotted the Chamber of Deputies in the hope of pressuring the King to dismiss Mussolini. Instead, Mussolini banned the Socialist Party, and then began to work against the other parties, eventually leading to the Fascist Party becoming the only party. The secession was named after a similar incident in the government of ancient Rome.

[2] Present-day readers may be tempted to think of the term 'corporative' as something relating to companies or business ventures. Evola, however, uses the term, as did the Fascists themselves, to describe a type of society in which its citizens are organised into groups based on the function they perform for the body of the entire society itself, such as agriculture, the military, or administration.

Strictly speaking, the problem presented a triple aspect: that of the electoral principle in general, that of the representative principle, and, finally, that of the political principle of hierarchy. The Fascist solution was a partial solution. From our point of view, however, the direction can be considered positive.

About the principle of representation and the concept of a parliament, today we have grown accustomed to associating them exclusively with the system of absolute democracy, based on universal suffrage and the principle of one man, one vote. This basis is absurd and indicates more than anything else the individualism that, combined with the pure criterion of quantity and of number, defines modern democracy. We say individualism in the bad sense, because here we are dealing with the individual as an abstract, atomistic and statistical unity, not as a 'person', because the quality of a person — that is, a being that has a specific dignity, a unique quality and differentiated traits—is obviously negated and offended in a system in which one vote is the equal of any other, in which the vote of a great thinker, a prince of the Church, an eminent jurist or sociologist, the commander of an army, and so on has the same weight, measured by counting votes, as the vote of an illiterate butcher's boy, a halfwit, or the ordinary man in the street who allows himself to be influenced in public meetings, or who votes for whoever pays him. The fact that we can talk about 'progress' in reference to a society where we have reached the level of considering all this as normal is one of the many absurdities that, perhaps, in better times will be the cause of amazement or amusement.

Apart from obvious worst cases, it is patently clear, because of the very nature of the democratic principle of representation, that it is impossible to ensure the pre-eminence of a public interest, especially if such an interest involves any transcendental content, 'political' in the opposite sense from 'social', a term now well-known to the reader. In fact, the individual can only have personal interests, or at most the interests of a category. Moreover, given the growing materialism of modern society, these interests assume an increasingly economic and physical character. It is therefore clear that anyone who wants to ensure himself a 'majority', in other words a number, will undergo the relevant conditioning, that is, he will have to restrict himself only to advancing the protection (even if dishonestly) of interests of this inferior type in his personal electoral program, or in his party's.

In the case of the democratic parliamentary system, we may add to this 'politicising', which, in the context of partisan politics, acquires many individual or social interests that in themselves should be non-political. Parties in the democratic system are not simple representatives of categories of interests. Tactically, they

appear rather in a sort of contest or competition for the best defence of the interests of this or that group of voters. In reality, however, each of them has a political dimension, that is, each has its own political ideology. They do not recognise interests and considerations that transcend them, they participate in the 'empty state', and each one aims at the conquest of power, which leads to a totally chaotic and inorganic situation.

This political surplus value[3] of parties appears clearly in the liberal democratic thesis according to which the plurality of parties constitutes a guarantee for 'liberty'. Many contrasting opinions, many points of view, and 'debate' would allow us to choose the best direction without following orders. Naturally all this is nonsense, if in Parliament or, better, in the 'Chamber of Deputies', there is the same application of the numerical criterion of 'one man, one vote', so that the representatives each have an equal, single vote, like the citizens who elected them. Therefore, after the 'debate', the biggest number will always dominate, and in fact there will always be a minority that will submit to the purely numerical violence of the majority. But we also need to take into account the reality that the plurality of parties and points of view can be productive only in a context of advice and collaboration, that is, in a context that presupposes a unity of principle and goals, but not when every party has a political surplus value and its own ideology, and does not try to fulfil its own function in an organic and disciplined system, but rather 'attacks the stagecoach', that is, mounts an assault on the state in order to conquer power. In fact, there is continual talk today of 'political struggle' in no uncertain terms, a struggle in which, according to the rules of democracy, every means is good.

The fact is that we ought to distinguish between a representative system in general and a representative system that is egalitarian, which has a levelling effect on society and is based purely on number. The state of the type that we call traditional recognised the representative principle, but in an organic context. It was a question not of representation or of individuals, but of 'bodies', where individuals were significant only insofar as they were part of a differentiated unity, and each individual had a different weight and quality. As a representation of bodies, the parliament, or another analogous institution, had an undoubted value, because it embraced the interests of the nation in all their richness and diversity. Thus, along with the representative principle, the hierarchical principle was affirmed, because the merely

[3] 'Surplus value' is a sarcastic reference to Marxist ideology, implying the Marxist basis of Italian partitocrazia.

numerical force of the groups, bodies or partial unities that had their own representatives in parliament was not taken in account, but instead their function and dignity. The fact that the climate and values of a traditional state are different from a democracy's means that it automatically excludes the pre-eminence, which is imposed by number, of interests of a lower order, as takes place today and will always take place in the modern, absolute democracies, because mass parties will always necessarily prevail in them. The States-General, or parliament as it existed in Hungary and Austria, which was based on the plan of the *Ständestaat*,[4] a characteristic designation for the system of a unity where representation was qualitative, articulated and graded, was close to the structure we are alluding to. The corporations, the nobility, the scholars, the army, and so on were represented as bodies that corresponded to the nation, which was qualitatively differentiated so as to treat the interests of the nation and the public in concert.

[NOTE: It is worth noting that there was a system based on an articulation of the right to vote which existed for a long time in Prussia,[5] after the concession of universal suffrage. The electors were divided into three categories, and the weight of the vote of one category was not equal to that of another. In practical terms, the weight of the vote in each category was in inverse proportion to their respective numerical make-up.]

These considerations of principle, which we have developed to a certain extent, are necessary so that, by bringing ourselves in this regard to a reality all too easily forgotten, we have the elements to evaluate adequately what was positive in the attempt at a Fascist reform of the system of representatives, a reform that can be described, depending on one's point of view, as revolutionary or counterrevolutionary (counterrevolutionary, if we take into account the fact that the parliamentary system, with its inorganic and quantitative basis, derived directly from the revolutionary ideologies of 1789 and 1848). The Chamber of Fasces and

[4] The term was used to describe a form of Catholic corporatist government that existed in Austria between the proclamation of the May Constitution of 1934 by Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, and lasted until the Anschluss of Austria with the Third Reich in 1938.

[5] A three-class franchise system was set up in Prussia for elections following the Revolution of 1848. All men over the age of 24 could vote, and the three classes were divided up according to the amount of taxes paid by the individual. This system was abolished following the dissolution of the German Empire in 1918.

Corporations[6] signified in principle a return to the system of representation by 'bodies'. The direction taken can therefore be considered as substantially positive.

There is, however, a difference, due to the accentuation of the aspect of a representation of 'competences',[7] in rather technical terms, which corresponded to the age. This emphasis, however, tended to categorically eliminate what we have called the political or ideological surplus value of representatives. Even with this restriction of the scope and concept of 'bodies', which replaced political parties, there was clearly an overcoming of the absurd democratic electoral system, which could bring to Parliament an incompetent party hack that nevertheless, by means of compromises and backroom deals, could play a role in the cabinet as a minister or undersecretary of state for a sector of national activity in which he lacks any serious preparation and training, not to mention any actual experience. The designation of parliamentary representation on the basis of corporations and unions prevented this absurdity. It was not the shapeless and ephemeral electoral mass, but its own circles of specialists who chose the representative as a person qualified for this function and who was determined to be competent in his field.

Fascism, however, was also a mixed system in which designation from above *per nomina*[8] was associated with election. Election or designation by the 'body' concerned not a single person, but different persons, among whom the government could choose, and in so doing could introduce criteria of a different order, even political criteria, without prejudice to the basic principle of the competences of the persons in question. Considered in this light, the Fascist reform therefore presented a character of rationality and plausibility. The actual praxis of the reform in the Fascist regime is another question, which concerns a field that, as we have said, falls outside the object of the present examination.

Therefore the Chamber of Fasces and Corporations was supposed to be a place, not of 'debates', but of coordinated labour, where criticism was admitted not on a political basis, but on a technical and objective one. Nevertheless, it was precisely this delimitation of scope inherent in representation by competences, with the inevitable emphasis that was placed on the productive economic sphere, which required an

[6] The Chamber of Fasces and Corporations was set up in January 1939 to replace the Chamber of Deputies. Unlike in the Chamber of Deputies, where representatives were chosen by popular vote, representatives in the new Chamber were nominated by the Fascist Grand Council, the National Council of Corporations, and the National Council of the Fascist Party.

[7] 'Competences' here refers to specialised areas of professional knowledge.

[8] Latin: 'by appointment'.

adequate institutional proclamation of the hierarchical principle in the sense of a higher request linked to the realm of ultimate ends. Once the parties were eliminated and representation was depoliticised, the purely political principle should have been concentrated and exercised on a distinct and superior level.

Even here, the state of a traditional type has often presented the model or outline of the system of two houses, with a lower house and an upper house. The closest example was the duality in England between the House of Commons and the House of Lords in its original form. A duality of this kind appears all the more necessary because Parliament was now, as we have said, composed of experts and corporations, and because organised 'bodies' that are exponents of higher values and traditions are practically non-existent in the modern world. Fascism found in Italy the duality of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.[9] The Fascist reform respected this duality, without investing the 'Upper House' with an adequately forceful reorganisation. During the Twenty Years, the Senate in general maintained its earlier character of an inefficient, decorative superstructure. A Senate with members designated exclusively from above, chosen in consideration especially for their political qualities, the quality of representatives of the 'transcendent' dimension of the state, and therefore also of spiritual, meta-economic and national factors, could have constituted a superior hierarchical presence in respect to the Chamber of Corporations. Wherever it became necessary, it could have asserted the 'order of ends', understood in the highest sense, before the 'order of means', and so established and realised the natural hierarchy of values and interests.

In this regard, however, Fascism's institutionally revolutionary and reconstructive force stopped halfway. In general, the Senate preserved the physiognomy given to it by tradition from the Italy of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and so remained without a real function. Even in this respect, the negative influence of the pluralism of the institutions made itself felt: the Fascist Party's hierarchies, all the way to the Grand Council, were meant to have an especially political value, whereas there was also the legacy of the monarchical institutions of the earlier Italy, to which the old version of the Senate belonged. We could add the Royal Academy of Italy itself, insofar as it was supposed to bring together exponents of superior values in principle, but not to stay in the sphere of highbrow culture so as to render it useless. All this could have been reduced to what is essential, unified and reorganised, and here obviously we should refer to what we said about the

[9] In the Kingdom of Italy, senators were appointed by the King.

establishment of an 'Order', which could have served as an essential nucleus within the Upper House. Despite all this, anyone who decides to make a comparison between the present Chamber of Deputies and especially the new Senate in Italy by considering them from the point of view of principles, in which, to a large extent, the absurd electoral principle of absolute democracy has been extended, should not have to hesitate, if he is asked to give his opinion concerning them.

Here and there in Fascism there appeared the aberrant formula of the 'state of labour', loudly proclaimed by the new constitution of the democratic state of Italy. Besides the concept of the 'ethical state' (the pedagogical state for spiritual minors), there were those who outlined the even more undesirable one of a 'humanism of labour' (here again we are talking about Giovanni Gentile). All this was merely the dross, the unessential and invalid parts of Fascism.

In fact, from the mouth of Mussolini himself, Fascism explicitly proclaimed, 'Corporations belong to the order of means and not to that of ends' (1934). The corporation is the institution with which 'the world of the economy, extraneous and disorganized until now, enters the state' (1934), thus allowing the political discipline to associate with the economic one. The entrance of the economy into the state should not be interpreted as introducing a 'Trojan horse'. Corporatism was not supposed to be a form or cover by means of which the economy would succeed in taking over the state, and so lead to the degradation and involution of the very idea of the state. The conclusion has effectively been the tendency of so-called 'pan-corporatism' expressed especially by some intellectuals of a Gentilian orientation at the corporative conference that was held at Ferrara in 1932. In this line there were those who could conceive of a type of corporative Communism ('proprietary corporatism' more or less under the control of the state) and who favoured the dissolution of the Party as an institution, to be replaced by a purely trade union/corporatist state. All these, however, remained ineffectual ideological dreams.

On the other hand, the distinction between the political sphere and the corporatist sphere was not abolished even in the opposite direction, starting from above, with a 'totalitarianism' imposed by the state. In fact, Mussolini indicated 'the totalitarian state' as third among the conditions for developing a 'full, complete, integral corporatism', along with ideal high tension and 'the introduction of political discipline along with economic discipline […] so there may be, beyond the opposition of interests, a bond that unites everything'. He also declared, 'The corporatist economy has many forms and is harmonious. Fascism has never thought of reducing it all to a greatest common denominator, transforming all the nation's economies into

a state monopoly. The corporations discipline them and the state does not take them over, except in the defence sector.' It was explicitly proclaimed that 'the corporatist state is not the economic state', which could be understood in a double sense: as opposition to the corporation's functioning either as the instrument of statist centralisation or as a takeover of the state by the economy.

IX

After this, we need to examine the corporatist principle in its economic and social aspect as well as the political one. In regard to this, too, Fascism restored, to a certain degree, a principle of the traditional legacy, the principle of the 'corporation' understood as an organic productive unity, not one fractured by the spirit of class and class struggle. In fact, the corporation as it existed in the context of artisan workmanship and before extreme industrialisation, and as it has often existed beginning with the best period of the Middle Ages (it is significant that abolishing the corporation was one of the first initiatives taken by the French Revolution), offered a plan that, adequately reorganised, could have served — and could still serve today— as a model for a general reconstructive action informed by the organic principle. Fascism, however, in fact performed this function only up to a certain point, mainly because of the remnants of the past that survived into the Twenty Years. Here we are dealing essentially with trade unionism, which continued to exercise a notable influence on Mussolini and the various elements close to him.

In its special aspect as an organisation that spans many businesses, the union movement is effectively inseparable from the concept of class struggle, and therefore also from the general Marxist view of society. This is a type of state within the state and therefore corresponds to one of the aspects of a system in which the authority of the state is minimised. The 'class' that is organised in the trade union is a part of the nation that aims at obtaining justice for itself, by itself, and which passes to direct action in terms that can often be defined as blackmail, in spite of the acknowledgement that it can extort: the so-called 'right to organise' is basically a right drawn from the sphere of effective rights that only the sovereign state ought to administer. It is known how for Sorel, whom Mussolini had admired in the past, trade unionism assumed a directly revolutionary value and was tied to a corresponding 'myth' or general idea of force.

On the other hand, we know that, in every regime that is not integrally socialist, such as those regimes where capitalism and private initiative have not been abolished, the existence of trade unionism brings about a situation that is chaotic, inorganic and unstable. Categories of workers struggle, using the instruments of the strike and other forms of blackmail, against the employers, who defend themselves with the 'lockout', which has become increasingly ineffective and rare. The struggle deteriorates into

one-sided pressure and extends to all contacts between workers and employers. Both groups care only for their own interests with no concern for the imbalances that their particular claims can cause to the nation as a whole, never mind the common good. The problem is usually dumped onto the state and the government, who therefore find themselves compelled to run back and forth knocking over and setting up the tottering and creaking structure over and over again. Only by believing in the miracle of some 'pre-established harmony', to use Leibniz's[1] expression, is it conceivable that the economy could function normally in a society where the state has increasingly given trade unions the right to organise themselves, and that the situation should not, as a result of numerous conflicts and other disruptions, become such that the only reasonable solution is to finally wipe the slate clean and accept the integrally socialist solution as the only one capable of establishing a principle of order and discipline, with a plan for the entire society. The situation of Italy at the moment in which we are writing can serve as a more than eloquent example of this truth.[2]

With corporatism, Fascism therefore undertook to overcome the state of affairs we have discussed as created by the union movement and the class struggle. It was a question of re-establishing the unity of various elements of productive activity, a unity prejudiced on the one hand by the deviations and prevarications of late capitalism, and on the other by the Marxist intoxication that was widespread throughout the working class masses, by excluding the socialist solution and reaffirming instead the authority of the state as the regulator and guardian of the idea of justice on the economic and social level. But, as we said, this reform, which was inspired by an organic principle and led to Fascist corporatism and its corresponding praxis, stopped halfway and did not reach the roots of the evil, because the Fascism of the Twenty Years lacked the courage to assume a clearly anti-union position. Instead, the system passed laws that resulted in confirming the division of employers and workers into two groups. This duality was not overcome where it ought to have been, that is, in the businesses themselves, by means of a new organic structuring, (that is, in its 'infrastructure'). Instead a general state superstructure was constructed,

[1] Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (1646-1716) was a highly influential German mathematician and philosopher. According to him, the universe consists of substances he termed 'monads'. All monads are independent from one another, but seem to interact without problems because God has set all of them to harmonise with all the others. He discusses this at length in his work The Monadology.

[2] In 1970, at the time Evola was preparing the second edition of this book, Italy was undergoing a great deal of unrest in the form of labour strikes, student protests, and the 'Years of Lead', which saw a wave of bombings, shootings and assassinations carried out by radicals of both the Left and the Right.

which was affected by a heavy centralism that was bureaucratic and, in practice, often parasitic and inefficient. Granted, Fascism eliminated the most disastrous aspects of the earlier system by prohibiting strikes and the 'lockout' and establishing regulations for labour contracts and forms of control that obviated what we have called the 'anarchism of claims' from every sector. Still, it was always a question of external regulations, at the most like an umpire's, which did not develop inside the concrete life of the community. Nevertheless, as we have seen, Mussolini, by pointing out the way towards an ideal special tension and emphasizing that the character of the corporation was not only economic but also ethical, demonstrated an accurate sense of the point at which the corporatist reforms should arrive. The essential point was a new climate that acted in a direct and formative way on businesses and restored to them the traditional character of 'corporations'. It therefore first dealt with acting on the mentalities of those involved. On the one hand, it was necessary to eliminate the proletarian and Marxist influences on the worker, and on the other to destroy the purely 'capitalist' mentality of the entrepreneur.

We might mention that, in principle, it was rather German National Socialism, and also the counterrevolutionary movements in Spain (Falangism) and Portugal (Salazar's constitution) that proceeded more decisively ahead in the correct, traditional direction. In the German case, even in this regard one should think of the influence exercised by the survival of older structures supported by a corresponding attitude and a corresponding tradition that did not exist in Italy. It was this influence that was bound to continue even after the collapse of Hitlerism and the formal elimination of National Socialist labour legislation, and it was due to this influence that what has been called the 'economic miracle',[3] the rapid rise of West Germany after the great catastrophe, took place.

National Socialism disbanded the unions and — as we shall say in our *Notes on the Third Reich*—aimed at overcoming the class struggle with a corresponding dualism right *inside* the business, within *every* single substantial business, along with giving it an organic and hierarchical formation to encourage a strict cooperation, and so reproducing in the business the same plan that the regime had proposed for the state. Once the enterprise was thought of in terms of a 'community' (that could be considered as corresponding to that of the ancient corporation), it became possible to recognize in the head of the business, by means of an analogy, the function of

[3] The 'economic miracle' was the rapid recovery of the West German economy following the devastation of the Second World War, beginning in 1948 and lasting into the 1950s.

a *Führer*, with the title of *Betriebsführer* (' *Führer* of the business'), while the workers came to be called his *Gefolgschaft*, a term that means literally his 'retinue', that is, a whole composed of associated elements that were supposed to be united by a sentiment of solidarity, hierarchical subordination and loyalty. This 'reciprocity of rights and duties', which according to the Fascist Charter of Labour (paragraph 7)[4] was supposed to derive from the 'cooperation of productive forces', came to be transferred to something living that alone could give it a solid foundation. It could be said that, against the Marxist and materialist mentality, the same type of 'military' attitude in the general sense, of which we have spoken earlier, could be made equally effective on the level of work and production.

In Germany the roles of mediating and reconciling disputes remained within the firm, with the recognition of the political principle as the final arbiter. These tasks, which in Italy were entrusted to the state Fascist corporative organs, were supposed to be discharged on an adequate scale in Germany by political trustees who were not part of the businesses, and who had the power to settle disputes, make recommendations and eventually modify the agreed-upon regulations by appealing to superior principles. The very designation of the highest court of this system as the 'Social Honour Court',[5] *Soziales Ehrengericht*, emphasises again the ethical aspect that was supposed to regulate solidarity between the workers and the owners within every business. As in the Fascist system, the principle of the German system was, in a word, that the entrepreneur's free initiative was accompanied by a responsibility before the state for directing production. Here we can recall once more the considerations we have already mentioned in regard to anti-totalitarianism and decentralisation: liberty and free initiative can be conceded to a greater degree, the greater the central power and the greater the gravitational centre to which the parts are connected by an immaterial, ethical link, more than through any kind of contractual or binding positive norm. In Germany's case, the businesses in their new

[4] The Fascist Charter of Labour was enacted in 1927. Paragraph 7 reads: 'The Corporate State considers private initiative in the field of production the most efficacious and most useful instrument in the interest of the nation. Private organization of production being a function of national interest, the organization of the enterprise is responsible to the State for the direction of its production. Reciprocity of the rights and duties is derived from the collaboration of the productive forces. The technician, office employee and worker is an active collaborator in the economic undertaking, the direction of which is the right of the employer, who has the responsibility for it.'

[5] The Social Honour Courts were established to mediate between the workers and the business owners in factories. Although modified by them, this was actually not an innovation of the National Socialists, as similar courts had existed in Germany prior to the Third Reich.

form as corporative bodies were only united under the auspices of the so-called 'German Labour Front'.

We can mention that Spain moved in a similar direction of organic, intra-company reconstruction. Also in Spain, employers and workers were not opposed to each other in a kind of permanent cold war, but were united by hierarchical solidarity. In the original plan of the so-called 'vertical corporation', the entrepreneur assumed the character of a leader — the *jefe de empresa*.[6] He had with him the *jurados de empresa*[7] as an advisory organ, corresponding perhaps to internal commissions and also to unions as they existed at one time in the United States (unions for each business or industrial complex, not organisations for all businesses of the same type). The system emphasised a principle of collaboration and loyalty instead of just defending the workers' interests.

It is appropriate to consider briefly the developments that the second Fascism, the republican and 'social' fascism of Salò, tried to give to the corporative reform. There are various aspects to this issue. In fact, on one hand, we can think of real progress made in the direction we have just discussed, because special attention was given to the figure of the business leader and, in principle, the projected establishment in the businesses of joint 'management committees' could naturally have been oriented in the direction of a regime of organic cooperation in fields where it would not be absurd to consult a layman (like particularly specialised technical problems or those involving upper management). The most audacious and revolutionary trait, however, was the so-called Verona Manifesto,[8] which was an attack on parasitic capitalism. The increased dignity and authority of the business leader that we just mentioned was acknowledged only in one who was 'the first worker', that is, to the committed capitalist entrepreneur, and not to the capitalist speculator who was foreign to the productive process and simply the beneficiary of dividends. (Marxist polemic can be justified, at least in part, only in regard to this second type.) In regard to this, too, we can think of a revival of the model of the ancient corporation, where the 'capitalists' who owned the means of production were not an element foreign to or separate from production, but was engaged in it as masters of the craft.

But the negative counterpart of this labour legislation of the second Fascism is visible in two points. The first concerns the so-called 'socialisation' with which, even

[6] Spanish: 'manager of a company'.

[7] Spanish: 'company juries'.

[8] The Verona Manifesto was issued by the government of the Italian Social Republic in November 1943, being its only major statement of policy. It was strongly socialist and pro-labour in orientation.

if it perhaps started from an organic exigency, overshot the mark and revealed a demagogic tendency — which, however, we cannot rule out was indulged in because of tactical considerations prompted by the critical, not to say desperate, situation in which the Fascism of Salò found itself. Mussolini was perhaps looking for ways to attract the working class, which was irresistibly drawn toward the orbit of Leftist ideologies. We could thus speak of an attempted opening, understood as a means of stopping the true Left. Socialisation in itself, however, could only represent an attack on business from the bottom and, aside from the absurdity of such a technical and functional order, on which it is not appropriate to linger, it is clear that it did not respond to the actual legitimate situation that inspired it, because of its evident one-sidedness.

In fact, the principal suggestion of the system proposed by this aspect of republican Fascist legislation concerns the sharing of blue- and white-collar workers in the enterprise's profits, something that in itself, within given limits, could be a just limitation of the possibilities left to a capitalism that exploits and accumulates profits. But regarding the elimination of these appealing aspects of the system, it would be enough to emphasise that, if we wanted to create a regime of true solidarity, sharing in the profits would have to have as its natural counterpart the sharing also of the eventual losses by the masses, with a corresponding reduction in wages and stipends, meaning solidarity in good fortune as well as bad, which in itself would be enough to cool enthusiasm for such a plan. The proper solution, which would be capable of ensuring a true commitment and shared responsibility, would have been not 'socialisation', but rather a system of blue- and white-collar workers receiving a percentage of the company's stocks (which would be inalienable to avoid speculation as dividends rose and fell), but not so large as to interfere with the entrepreneur's ownership of the business. This system has recently been tried experimentally by certain big businesses abroad. This is certainly not the place, however, to examine problems of this sort, which we have mentioned only to show, by means of a comparison, the limits and compromises of the labour legislation of the second Fascism.

The second negative and regressive point in this legislation was the strengthening of the union movement and, at the same time, centralisation by creating a single confederation in which the leadership would have been given to the unions, which were still acknowledged and tolerated, who would then have had the task of deciding 'in all questions relevant to the life of the business and the direction and development of production in the context of the national plan established by

competent state organs'. In a different sense from what was part of the dualistic plan of corporative legislation during the Twenty Years, the confederation of the second Fascism did not contemplate separate groupings for entrepreneurs and workers, but instead aimed at an 'umbrella of a single confederation comprising all workers, technicians, and professionals'.[9] Before this bloc, the second Fascism obviously treated as secondary the problem — which is fundamental for us — of the organic reconstruction of infrastructure in every business, considered in its autonomy. We can then see again in outline, on the national and governmental level, an ambiguity that in principle could create either of the two negative developments we have pointed out earlier: the takeover of the state by the economy: 'labour' and production, on the one hand, or, on the other, the 'totalitarian' nationalisation of the economy. If the formula we have just quoted, which spoke of 'a national plan established by competent organs of the state', could lead in the other direction, perhaps we should mention that the 'bloc' considered in that way could also enter into the vision of 'total mobilisation' imposed by an emergency situation, and could be justified by that situation alone (and for the duration of the emergency). This was exactly the situation in which 'republican' Fascism found itself in the tragic climate at the end of the war. Clearly, however, this enters into the field of contingency, from which it is impermissible to gather anything that concerns the areas of doctrine or of normative principles.

Concluding our overall examination of the Fascist corporatist experiment, we can therefore see that all sorts of claims were made, the validity and legitimacy of which become clearer when we remember the present economic and social situation, and when we acknowledge the critical and chaotic aspects that remain despite certain outward signs of economic recovery, or even of an ephemeral prosperity. These include, for instance, the exacerbation of the class struggle and the progressive yielding of the state before a legalised demagoguery that now seems to know no limits. Again, we should note and highlight that the positive elements of Fascism in this area, as well as whatever further reconstructive developments could have taken place with the removal of the limitations we have mentioned, do not amount to anything 'revolutionary' in the negative or exclusively innovatory sense, but, once more, relate only to elements within Fascism for which the proper soil was an older

[9] Article 16 of the Verona Manifesto read, in part, 'All the trade unions are gathered together under the umbrella of a single confederation comprising all workers, technicians, and professionals (but excluding landlords, who are neither managers nor technicians.' From Jeffrey Schnapp, Maria Stampino & Olivia Sears (eds.), A Primer of Italian Fascism (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), p. 201.

culture: elements of traditional inspiration, whether or not the promoters of corporative Fascism were conscious of them.

As the reader will have seen, we have not thought it appropriate to speak at all about 'national socialism', in which some have wanted to see one of the essential and valid traits of Fascism: the creation of this kind of socialism, in their opinion, was supposed to have been the principal mission assumed not only in Italy but also in Germany, and the Fascist Charter of Labour was supposed to have laid the foundations for this special 'socialist culture'. We cannot take these, and similar, ideas seriously. We refuse to discuss 'socialism' apart from its values, which are incompatible with Fascism's highest and clearly asserted vocation. Socialism is socialism, and adding the adjective 'national' merely disguises it as a 'Trojan horse'. Once 'national socialism' was established (with the inevitable elimination of the values and hierarchies incompatible with it) it would soon become socialism without an adjective, because you cannot stop halfway down a slope.

In its day, Italian Fascism was one of the most advanced and progressive regimes in its social measures. The corporatism of the Twenty Years, in terms of what was valid in it, should be interpreted in the context of an organic and anti-Marxist idea, and therefore outside of everything that can be legitimately called 'socialism'. Exactly — but only — to this extent could Fascism have been a 'third way',[10] a possibility offered to European civilisation, opposed to both Communism and capitalism. Therefore, every interpretation of Fascism as an 'opening to the Left' ought to be avoided, if one wants to avoid degrading it. With all due respect for some enthusiasts of the 'national state of labour' who seem today not to have noticed that while they would like to play the role of opposition and even be 'revolutionaries', this is more or less exactly the institutional formula proclaimed in the constitution of today's democratic and anti-Fascist Italy.

[10] Proponents of fascism, both in Italy and other countries, talked of it as the only alternative to democracy and Marxism. Mussolini said of the Second World War in 1940, 'This conflict must not be allowed to cancel out all our achievements of the past eighteen years, nor, more importantly, extinguish the hope of a Third Alternative held out by Fascism to mankind fettered between the pillar of capitalist slavery and the post of Marxist chaos.' Quoted in Frank Joseph, Mussolini's War: Fascist Italy's Military Struggles from Africa and Western Europe to the Mediterranean and Soviet Union 1935-45 (West Midlands, UK: Helion & Company, 2010), p. 50.

X

Let us proceed to another point, concerning the national economy in terms of its relationship to the international economy. In many circles today, it is fashionable to condemn the Fascist principle of autarchy as an absurdity. From our point of view, we cannot be in complete agreement with this opinion.

Just as when we are dealing with persons, so with nations, one of the greatest goods is liberty and autonomy. Mussolini affirmed this need clearly when he said, 'Without economic independence the political independence of a nation is doubtful, and a nation of great military power may become the victim of an economic blockade'[1] (1937). Therefore, in Mussolini's opinion, the new phase of Italian history ought 'to be dominated by this postulate: to realise the greatest possible degree of autonomy in the economic life of the nation in the shortest time possible' (1936). Talk about a 'mysticism of autarchy' is a natural part of the abuse in recent times of the term 'mysticism'. [NOTE: We find the same abuse in the expression 'Fascist mysticism'. There was even a 'School of Fascist Mysticism' created at Milan.[2] Although this organisation promoted some interesting initiatives and involved various qualified individuals from the new generation of those days, there was certainly no reason to talk about 'mysticism'. The most one could legitimately refer to prior to this development was an 'ethic of Fascism'. As we have said, Fascism did not confront the problem of higher values, of the sacred, which are the only values in relation to which we can talk about 'mysticism'. In regard to these values, however, during the Twenty Years, Fascism remained on the level of vague and conformist references to the dominant religion.] We can, however, speak perfectly well of an 'ethic of autarchy', on the basis of the word's origin. Autarchy comes to us from Classical antiquity, especially from the Stoic[3] schools that professed an ethics of

[1] Quoted in Cesare Santoro, Hitler Germany as Seen by a Foreigner (Berlin: Internationaler Verlag, 1939), p. 85.

[2] The School of Fascist Mysticism was established in 1930 with the intention of establishing the basis for a mystical basis for the Fascist community, based upon the idea of fideism, or an irrationalist conception of faith.

[3] Stoicism was a school of philosophy which originated in Classical Athens, although as a term it continues to be applied today to philosophies which share its general characteristics. Basically, the Stoics believed that it is human emotions which lead individuals into error, and that the only way to lead a truly

independence or the sovereignty of the individual. In order to guard this value, where it was necessary, one had to follow the strict principle of *abstine et sustine*.[4]

The Fascist principle of autarchy can therefore be considered as a kind of extension of this ethic to the plane of the national economy. An orientation of which we can completely approve is that of, if necessary, holding the general standard of living relatively low, adopting what the English call 'austerity', which, even in a different context, has had to be practiced here and there by different nations after the Second World War, but assuring ourselves a maximum of independence. In the case of a nation with limited natural resources, like Italy, a certain regime of autarchy and austerity was, in fact, the right direction. As for the course of the national life, we hold the normal situation to be the complete opposite of everything we are witnessing today: apparently generalised prosperity and thoughtless living from day to day beyond one's means, along with a frightening state debt balance, leading to extreme economic and social instability, growing inflation and an invasion of foreign capital which brings with it many important visible and invisible influences.

Naturally, it is not right to go overboard in the opposite direction. In every respect, we can be guided by the analogy offered by the behaviour of a man worthy of the name. He can promote the development of his body and bodily health, but not become its slave. When it is necessary, he reins in the corresponding impulses and makes them obey a higher will, even at the cost of sacrifices. He does the same thing every time he wants to or must confront tasks that demand particular strain. In order to make possible what, on the national level, corresponds to a similar line, adequate relations have to be established between the political principle of an organic national state and the world of the economy, which corresponds to its corporal part.

In Fascism, on the one hand, the creation of a strong state was envisioned in which all the possibilities of the nation were activated, but it cannot be denied, on the other hand, that by autarchy Fascism did not envision a sort of 'splendid isolation' (as the French say) of the nation, rendered self-sufficient as far as possible. It was also preparing and collecting the nation's forces in anticipation of an armed encounter between states, with the experiences of the campaign in Ethiopia[5] serving as a

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virtuous life is to transcend the emotions. They also emphasized the importance of logic and reason as the sole paths to genuine knowledge.

[4] Latin: 'abstain and sustain'.

[5] Conflict between Italy and Ethiopia dated back to Italy's colonial interests in the country during the nineteenth century. Following a crisis, Italy attacked Ethiopia in October 1935. Although the Italians ultimately won in May 1936, their poor performance against the Ethiopians showed the weakness and

warning. Mussolini's statements quoted above also undeniably emphasise this aspect. Still, apart from all this, and understanding the principle of autarchy in terms of a challenge to the economy and its presumed iron laws that create 'our destiny', it cannot be said in this regard that the results of experience have been negative. In Italy and also in Germany before the Second World War, internal economic affairs could go on more or less as usual despite the virtual international boycott suffered by the two nations and, especially, the devaluing of their currency abroad.

So from autarchy as scandal and economic heresy, we can move on to considerations of a more general character.

The Marxist formula 'the economy is our destiny',[6] with the corresponding interpretation of history as a function of the economy, is well-known. But economic determinism has also been acknowledged by currents other than Marxism, some of which are even opposed to it. Here we can say that, if taken in itself, this formula is absurd, but unfortunately not if we take into consideration the modern world, because the modern world has caused it to become a reality to an increasingly greater degree. The pure *homo oeconomicus*[7] is an abstraction but, like many abstractions, it can become a reality by means of a process of hypertrophy and the absolutising of one part in respect to the whole. At the point in which the economic interest becomes dominant, it is natural that man becomes the subject of the laws of the economy, which acquire an almost autonomous character, until other interests are reaffirmed and a superior power intervenes.

That 'economic man' did not exist was also Mussolini's point of view, who opposed his idea of 'integral man' (1933) to 'economic man'.[8] His idea was that 'politics has dominated and will always dominate the economy', mentioning in this context that what gets conceived as man's destiny 'is, at least three quarters of it, created by weakness or strength of will' (1932). Here we can mention Spengler's

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unpreparedness of the Italian military, and it also isolated Italy from the international community, which reacted with condemnation. Italy's possession of Ethiopia only lasted for four years, as they were driven from the country by the British in 1940, during the Second World War.

[6] This phrase was first used by Walther Rathenau, the German Foreign Minister, in 1922. He was assassinated by the Freikorps in 1922. Rathenau was not a Marxist.

[7] Latin: 'economic man'.

[8] Mussolini said, 'We have rejected the theory of the economic man, the Liberal theory, and we are, at the same time, emancipated from what we have heard said about work being a business. The economic man does not exist; the integral man, who is political, who is economic, who is religious, who is holy, who is combative, does exist.' Quoted in George Seldes, Sawdust Caesar: The Untold History of Mussolini and Fascism (London: Barker, 1936), p. 426.

perspectives. In his examination of the forms with which a cycle of cultures comes to an end, with the descent to the level of a *Zivilisation*, he considered the level at which the economy becomes dominant and creates a certain connection between democracy, capitalism and finance. This connection demonstrates, moreover, the illusory nature of the 'liberty' claimed in this last period. Obviously 'political liberties' are nothing without economic liberty or autonomy, in the individual field as well as the collective one: in the collective field because it is the groups in possession of wealth who control the press and all the other means of shaping 'public opinion' and disseminating propaganda in a democratic regime; in the individual and practical field, because access to the various 'conquests' of modern technical and economic civilisation, with its apparent prosperity, are paid for with just as many constraints on the individual, with an increasingly rigorous integration into the collective gears set in motion by the economy and in front of which 'political liberties' are something derisory.

Spengler, however, predicted a successive phase, which he called the phase of 'absolute politics' and which was related to the appearance of those new leaders of a problematic type, of which we have spoken earlier (cf. Chapter VII). While we hold to the reservations we have made concerning this last subject, from the perspective of the whole it is, however, possible to imagine a change in the situation so as to create a strong state, based on the detached principle of authority. The strong state can be given the task of reining in the 'blind giant'[9] of the economy as destiny. Werner Sombart[10] coined the expression 'blind giant' with reference especially to high capitalism and its immanent determinisms. This specific reference can be taken into consideration: beginning with the principle of the pre-eminence of politics over the economy, and with a return to the idea of the true state. With its sovereignty and authority realised in a system of adequate social structures, even the monstrous development of capitalism in the direction of unfettered productivity can be limited, with the ultimate end of restoring the economy, and everything that is economic, to the subordinate position in which it becomes only a means to an end, and a circumscribed dominion within a much vaster hierarchy of values and interests.

To complete these considerations, it is possible to specify this ultimate end in regard to its content, and say that, from our point of view, the essential thing would

[9] Werner Sombart refers to capitalism by this term in his book The Quintessence of Capitalism (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1915), p. 359.

[10] Werner Sombart (1863-1941) was a German economist and sociologist, who came to support the idea of 'German socialism' late in his life.

be to reach an equilibrium, a stability, and put a stop to unlimited change. There could be no question of this in Fascism, which still had before it the hard work of getting the nation into economic, industrial and social shape. This was enough of a task, even apart from its expansionist projects which were tied to a certain aspiration toward 'greatness', rather than to the 'splendid isolation' of autarchy, as we have called it. Under these conditions, an active and dynamic orientation was only natural, a drive forward. The formula 'anyone who stops is lost' could even be enunciated, despite its problematic character, indicating the obviously anti-autarchic implications of accepting one's entrance into a general process of conditioning without defensive measures.

So no one asked the ultimate question, namely that of the ideal culture to strive for, definitely or in principle. That would mean wondering how far we felt ourselves called to go against the current of the general movement that was carrying the modern world towards what was predicted to be progress but, in relation to its genuine internal sense, should rather be called, as by Bernanos,[11] a 'retreat forward'. How far, at a particular time, would it be appropriate to consider an orientation that could be called 'opposition to progress' by people who confuse stability and a willed, positive limit with immobility and inertia, and who do not acknowledge that stopping, a break on the 'horizontal' direction, the direction of change and evolution in a material, technical and economic sense of processes that end by escaping from man's control. This will always be the precondition for progress or movement in a 'vertical' direction, for the realisation of higher possibilities and the true autonomy of the person, and finally, to use a well-known formula, for a realisation of 'being' beyond 'well-being'.

All this obviously carries us rather far beyond the topic of an examination of the doctrine of Fascism, except for the possibilities that are virtually offered by the relationship between political power and the economy that were conceived and in part realised by Fascism. For these possibilities to succeed we must presuppose an adequate choice of vocations and, naturally and essentially, the eventual stabilising within the nation of a certain general climate and a different vision of life, which are opposed to those that are in fact coming irresistibly to predominate in our time.

[11] Georges Bernanos (1888-1948) was a French writer who was anti-democratic in his beliefs.

XI

Even among those in Italy today who criticise the democratic regime and do not deny the value of some aspects of Fascism, 'racism' has been judged, in general, to be one of the dark aspects of Fascism about which it is better to keep silent, or as a kind of 'foreign body' that wormed its way into the system. In this interpretation, Fascism is supposed to be the subordinate and imitator of Hitlerism in the last period of the Italian-German alliance, the Rome-Berlin Axis.[1]

In this way of thinking, a significant role has often been played by the ambiguity resulting from making 'racism' a simple synonym for anti-Semitism and the brutal persecution of the Hebrew. So it can happen that a journal that calls itself 'neo-Fascist' highlighted various data gathered even from Hebrew authors in order to rub out the alleged stain and demonstrate that Mussolini was not really 'racist', because during the war, in the most critical period of the German occupation of Italy, Fascism not only did not persecute the Jews, but often even protected them. On this subject there is an obvious confusion between what could be attributed to humanitarian sentiment and an aversion for certain deplorable methods used by the Germans, and a question of principle.

So it will be appropriate to offer a brief exposition of the subject. We can speak of three factors that led Mussolini to confront the problem of race in 1938.[2] On 5 August 1938, an official document[3] declared, 'The climate is now ripe for an Italian racism', for which the Grand Council outlined the fundamental directives the following October. The first legislative provisions 'for the defence of the Italian race' were promulgated the following month. Of the three factors, the one that concerned the Hebraic problem was the most incidental. There are few or no references to this problem in Mussolini's early writings. One can only cite an old article that mentions a well-known theme, that the Hebrew, subjugated and deprived of the usual means to

[1] The Rome-Berlin Axis was established on 22 May 1939 by the signing of the 'Pact of Steel', in which the two nations pledged to come to the aid of the other in the event of war.

[2] Prior to the issuing of the 'Manifesto of Race' in July 1938, the Fascist regime had had no official racial doctrine.

[3] This was announced in the first issue of the Fascist publication La Difesa della Razza, which was published on that date. La Difesa was intended to inspire popular support for Fascism's new racial policies.

compete directly in the modern world, had recourse to the indirect means constituted by money, finance and intelligence (in the profane sense) to exercise power and for self-affirmation. In addition, in an article from 1919, Mussolini wondered whether Bolshevism, which was supported in its origins by Jewish bankers in London and New York and counted (at that time) numerous Hebrews among its leaders, did not represent 'Israel's revenge against the Aryan race'.[4]

On the other hand, there is no need to recall that anti-Semitism was certainly not born with Nazism, and that the Hebrew throughout history, beginning with the Roman world, has been the subject of aversion and persecution. In the Christian era this has often been sanctioned by sovereigns, popes and councils. Moreover, it must be acknowledged that the Jewish problem in Italy was never a particularly hot issue, and Mussolini's stance towards it in 1938 had a more political than ideological character. In fact, there had been a notable increase in reports by Italian diplomats and other sources of information about the growth of militant anti-Fascist hostility demonstrated by Jewish elements abroad, especially in America, that was connected (or not) with Italy's alliance with Germany. So Mussolini was finally compelled to react, and the Jews in Italy, who, apart from a few exceptions, had not given any special indications of anti-Fascist sentiments (there were Jews among the *squadristi*, the Fascist toughs) ended up suffering the consequences of the attitude of their non-Italian co-religionists because of measures that, however, can in no way be compared with the German ones, and very often remained on paper and were not enforced. Since we are discussing doctrine here, we do not have to deal with this aspect of Fascist 'racism'. An examination of the Jewish problem in its full complexity belongs to a different context.[5]

As for 'race', Mussolini often talked about it. At a time when there can have been no suspicion of Hitler's influence, in April 1921, Mussolini delivered a speech in Bologna which connected the birth of Fascism to 'a profound, perennial need of our Aryan and Mediterranean stock, that at a certain moment felt itself threatened in its essential reasons for existence'. From the same year comes his affirmation that 'it is with the race that history is made' and in 1927 he stated, 'We must rigorously watch over the destiny of the race; we must take care of the race'.[6] Many other, similar

[4] Mussolini wrote this in his 'Il Popolo d'Italia', quoted in Michele Sarfatti, The Jews in Mussolini's Italy: From Equality to Persecution (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), p. 42.

[5] See Julius Evola, Three Aspects of the Jewish Problem (Kemper, France: Thompkins & Cariou, 2003).

[6] Mussolini said this in his Ascension Day speech of 26 May 1927, quoted in R. J. B. Bosworth, Mussolini's Italy: Life Under the Fascist Dictatorship, 1915-1945 (New York: Penguin Books, 2007).

references can be given. In 1938, at the general congress of the Fascist Party, Mussolini could recall these precise antecedents in rejecting the accusation of simply aping the Germans, adding also that when he had talked of stock, he meant 'to refer to race'. If, however, in the first quotation, the term 'Aryan' could have a specifically racist meaning, in all the other cases he talked about race in a general sense. In fact, we often encounter a definite confusion between the concepts of race and nation. This kind of confusion continues to appear in the so-called 'Manifesto of Race'[7] (a thoroughly botched and superficial document), which talks of the 'Italian race'. The same expression is used in the Fascist 'racist' legislation of 1938. Naturally, this is absurd. No historical nation is a 'race'. Apart from some eugenicist examples, talk about the 'defence of the race' in these terms ends up giving a vague pseudo-biological and ethnic flourish to the nationalist position. At most, the words could be referring to an 'historical ethnic stock'. It is not enough. We should point out that identifying a race with a nation, and exalting what was supposed to find its main expression in the National Socialist collectivising concept of the *Volksgemeinschaft* (that is, the national and racial unity, or community of the race/people) ends with attacking the notion of race itself, emptying it of all meaning by democratising it. As K. A. Rohan[8] has correctly noted, there was still one thing that democracy had not been able to conquer, that is, race in the aristocratic sense, because only an *elite* is 'thoroughbred'[9] and a 'race', while the people is only people, a mass. With a promiscuous identification of race with nation to the point of speaking of an 'Italian race', a 'German race', and so on, this last bulwark falls and collapses. So we could and still can take a position against this kind of 'racism' by assuming an aristocratic and hierarchical point of view.[10]

In any case, the second factor that led to Fascism's racist orientation was the concept of a type of national 'racial' consciousness. This concept is also linked to an accidental circumstance, the conquest of Ethiopia and the creation of the African

[7] 'The Manifesto of Race' is included in A Primer of Italian Fascism.

[8] Prince Karl Anton Rohan (1898-1975) was an Austrian First World War veteran, monarchist and anti-modernist who later supported both Fascism and National Socialism, and hoped for a reconciliation between Christianity and the latter. He published his own European Review from 1925 until 1936, which called for the creation of a new European identity in keeping with Europe's unique cultural and religious mission, and which would revive Europe's ancient values.

[9] In Evola's Italian, this reads as essere di razza. According to Spengler and other authors, one who is 'of race' represents the highest qualities of a particular people. This elite, therefore, are the only genuine representatives of a people.

[10] See Julius Evola, The Elements of Racial Education (Kemper, France: Thompkins & Cariou, 2005).

empire. In this regard, Fascist 'racism' had the same practical and non-ideological character of the attitudes that were shared by many European nations with colonies, with England at the forefront, which nourished a sentiment of 'race' in order to protect the prestige of Whites with adequate measures against coloured peoples, and to prevent miscegenation, which would lead to bastard and hybrid crossbreeding. This was more or less the meaning of a decree promulgated by the Fascist government as early as 1937.[11] Mussolini therefore did nothing more than follow what was already traditional before the rise of the democratic ideology, with its principle of the so-called 'self-determination of peoples', which was proclaimed by Whites, and then boomeranged against them, provoking the emergence, demands and uprising of coloured peoples, until the Europeans themselves became infected with the psychosis of anti-colonialism.

Mussolini, on the other hand, had acknowledged the 'fertilising, beneficent and unassailable inequality of men',[12] and his conduct was therefore, in this regard, coherent, and, from our point of view, correct. Distances had to be maintained. The next step could be seen in what he said in a speech on 18 September 1938, when he spoke of the necessity of arousing in Italians 'a clear, severe consciousness of race that would establish not only differences, but also very clear superiorities'. It is appropriate, however, to remember that in another, earlier speech, delivered to Eastern students, Mussolini had taken a position against inferior and materialist colonialism, condemning the attitude of those who thought of their colonial territories only in terms of 'sources of raw materials and markets for factory-made goods'. Thus he drew close to the fundamental point. Beyond all prejudice linked simply to skin colour, it was necessary to establish a hierarchical principle, and confront the problem of the legitimacy of the right to rule over a people and their commensurate culture. It is not possible to hide the serious character of this problem. In fact, if we consider the period of true colonialism, we have to acknowledge that this legitimacy was largely non-existent, when it was not a question of savages, Negroes, and other inferior races, but also of peoples that already possessed their own ancient civilisation and tradition, like, for instance, the case of the Hindus. To these peoples, 'Whites' could present nothing besides their technological civilisation and their material and organisational superiority, along with Christianity and its strange claim to be the only true religion or, at least, the highest religion. They confronted the

[11] This was the year that the first law against race-mixing was introduced in occupied Ethiopia. A similar law had already been enacted in Eritrea in 1933.

[12] Mussolini, 'The Doctrine of Fascism'.

serious implications of the hierarchical principle and the invocation of 'race consciousness' (the race/nation) insofar as the latter ought to include a sentiment not only of differences, but also of a real superiority. It is clear that we cannot take into account here the problems of a 'people without room',[13] possibly exasperated by a 'demographic campaign', and we have already pointed this out in speaking of the last issue. The pressure of numbers cannot make any Right meaningful in a higher, ethical or spiritual sense, and Mussolini's famous apostrophe at the time of the campaign in Ethiopia, 'Proletarian and Fascist Italy, on your feet!' was certainly one of the most deplorable ever suggested by the 'populist' component of his personality. At most, he could have spoken of an Italy of workers, without borrowing the Marxist jargon and transferring, as it were, the corresponding, fatal myth of the 'class struggle' (something Corradini[14] had already started to do in a nationalist tone) to the international sphere.

Then again, there is no need to say that, in the condition to which the Western peoples have been reduced today, problems of the sort we were just now discussing have become devoid of all sense. On the one hand, today there subsists only concealed forms of economic colonialism, that is, the influence upon the 'underdeveloped' coloured peoples who have finally become independent by means of foreign capital and industry (this is the so-called 'second colonialism', in which America and Russia are the principal rivals).[15] On the other hand, there is an increasingly clear renunciation of real independence in the new non-European 'nations' because we are facing a strange paradox: apart from primitive and genuinely inferior ethnic stocks, a series of non-European peoples have broken free of the 'colonialist' yoke only to submit to it in a worse form than previously existed in the straightforward economic exploitation administered by foreigners. Increasingly renouncing their traditions, which date back for ages, these peoples have Westernised, adopting the culture, ideologies, political forms and lifestyles of White peoples, therefore increasingly

[13] 'People without room' was a phrase coined by the German nationalist writer Hans Grimm, and which expressed his belief that lack of geographical space was hampering the development of the German nation. This phrase became a popular National Socialist slogan, and was used to justify German expansionism into Eastern Europe and Russia.

[14] Enrico Corradini (1865-1931) was an Italian writer who was the leader of the Italian Nationalist Association.

[15] Some spoke of a 'second wave of colonialism' during the Cold War, as both the United States and the Soviet Union were active in influencing politics, sometimes through direct intervention, in countries throughout the world, and most especially the Third World, in an effort to influence them to support their foreign policies aimed at countering the opposite power.

capitulating to the pseudo-civilisation of Whites, with no other ambition than 'development' and self-affirmation, as so many grotesque facsimiles of the states of White peoples, and opposing them only on these terms. So everything converges towards a general levelling, and only the ugliest relationships of power and spheres of influence can be the determining factor of their development, even more so than in the past.

[NOTE: Until just the other day it was possible to see an interesting exception in Japan: the coexistence of a traditional culture and external modernisation. After the Second World War, however, this equilibrium has been increasingly altered to the advantage of modernisation, and the last bulwarks against it are falling, one after the other.]

Returning to our chief subject, we need to consider the third and most important factor of the Fascist turn to 'racism'. Here we can absolutely talk about continuity and coherence in respect to ideas always professed by Mussolini. There was a problem that interested Mussolini, and to which he believed that an important contribution could be made by racism in the proper, positive sense (that is, distinct from both anti-Semitism and from the defence of the prestige of the people/race — the 'Italian race' — before coloured peoples). This was the problem of the formation of a new type of Italian, to be differentiated in the rather fragile and anarchic temperamental substance of our people. (A substance presenting such characteristics was also far from corresponding to a certain homogeneous 'race'.) Mussolini thought — and he was not mistaken — that the future of Fascism and the nation depended not so much on the transmission of ideas and institutions as much as on a formative action that causes a selected 'type' to arise. Creating 'a new way of life' and 'a new type of Italian' had been a need felt by Mussolini from the very beginnings of the regime — and we saw that during a period in which there can certainly be no talk of Nazi influence, because Hitler had not yet attained power in 1929. In the report on the Vatican accords delivered in Parliament, Mussolini spoke of an action of the state that, in 'continually transforming the nation', could reach all the way to 'its physical aspect'. This is an idea that was closely connected to the general doctrine, which we have already discussed, of the relationship between state and people, as between 'form' and 'matter'.

This is exactly the positive and creative aspect of the issue of political racism. In principle we are not dealing with anything imaginary. History presents us with quite a few examples of races, not as given primal groups, but as groups that are formed with sufficiently stable characteristics in relation to a given culture and tradition,

defined especially by a mode of being, by an 'interior race'. We can start out with the people of Israel, that originally was not a single pure and homogeneous race, but was instead an ethnic compound united and formed by a religious tradition, and which continued all the way to the United States, where an easily recognisable type was rapidly born from a rather unlikely ethnic mix because of the climate of a given culture, or rather pseudo-culture (this situation allows us to glimpse much greater possibilities when this process instead involves a real culture with a traditional character).

Moreover, we can aim at the ideal of human completeness. While the reference to race and blood could count as an objection against all that is individualism, intellectualism and superficial comportment, already from current expressions, such as 'thoroughbred', or *être racé*, which can be applied not only to a human being, but also to an animal, it was possible to reach a specific and unexceptional meaning of 'race'. It was a question of a true, maximal correspondence with the 'type' of each species, something that cannot be observed in the masses, but only in a restricted number of cases. All the protests of intellectuals, or of those who regard themselves as being 'spiritual', count for nothing against the consideration that it would only be good and beneficial if true values were defended by men that, even as physical race (*soma*)[16] and as character (race of soul) reproduce a higher type, instead of showing a painful break between body and spirit. In this regard, we can leave aside all modern 'racism' and refer to an ideal that is Classical, even Hellenic. This would mean that certain, almost hysterical, reactions to which some intellectuals and men of culture give way as soon as they hear talk of race, run the risk of being indicative only of the fact that they have not come to terms with 'race'.

We mentioned that 'The Manifesto of Race', which was compiled in 1938 as a prelude to the turn to racism by a small group of elements of a rather heterogeneous orientation,[17] raked up from here and there, was bungled and inconsistent, partly because of the complete lack of adequate preliminary studies in Italy. *Inter alia* the 'Manifesto' affirmed that the concept of race 'is a purely biological concept' and, apart from the use of the absurd term 'Italian race', asserted that 'the population of Italy today is of Aryan origin, and its civilisation is Aryan',[18] neglecting to indicate exactly

[16] Classical Greek: 'body'.

[17] There was a great deal of debate amongst those who contributed to the manifesto, many of whom had very different motivations and philosophical attitudes. The manifesto underwent so many revisions that some of those who worked on it demanded that their names be removed from the final version.

[18] 'The Manifesto of Race', p. 173.

what 'Aryan' was supposed to mean. In fact, this Aryan character was reduced to something negative and problematic, and consisted of not being Hebrew or from a coloured race, with no positive counterpart, nor any specification of a higher criterion to establish the comportment, style, worldview, or predispositions of character and spirit of the person who was to be called Aryan. The foreign influence here is clear, since it is specified that Fascist racism should be of 'Nordic-Aryan orientation'.

In the development of a serious ideology concerning race, all this would have had to be reconsidered and corrected. It happens to be the case that we can personally attest to the fact that Mussolini was absolutely inclined toward developments of this kind. Even before Fascism's racist turn, we had the opportunity to take a stance against racism[19] that was of a biological and scientific character, on the one hand, and collectivising and fanatical, on the other, such as prevailed in Germany, opposing to it a 'racism' that, while maintaining a vision of the ideal we have discussed of human completeness and interest, particularly emphasised what we called the 'inner race', asserting on this topic a traditional, anti-materialist conception of the human being. Moreover, the 'inner race' could have been the base and fulcrum for the formative action we have talked about. Even if it were right to propose a 'type' as the ideal and centre of crystallisation, it was not appropriate for Italy to refer to the Nordic-Aryan type, following the Germans. The science of origins had ascertained that different groups differentiated from a common primal stock ('Indo-European', 'Aryan'): on one side the Hellenic element (especially the Doric of Sparta), on another the basal Roman element, and finally the German element. Various typical traits of character, ethics, customs, worldview and culture shared by these three stocks attest this single, remote origin. Thus for this centre of crystallisation we could choose the 'Aryo-Roman' type with its characteristic gifts, which could constitute an adequate integration of Fascism's bold 'Roman' vocation on a concrete level, while remaining completely independent of German racism. We expounded these ideas, along with many others, in a book, *Synthesis of a Doctrine of Race*.[20] Mussolini read the book and invited me to meet him. It is symptomatic that he approved of its theses unconditionally, and finally agreed that we would undertake some rather significant initiatives based on the book. The crisis of events and certain internal doubts kept us from completing them.

[19] Evola began elaborating his doctrine of race in his essay 'Race and Culture' from 1934. He also wrote a book, The Blood Myth, in 1937 about race.

[20] Julius Evola, Sintesi di dottrina della razza.

Concretely it was a question of observing that a nation is not a 'race', and in every member of an historic nation there exist various components or possibilities. An adequate climate of high stress can create a situation where some of these possibilities get the upper hand and achieve a differentiation that can gradually reach the level of *soma*. As a particular case, some people have noted the delineation of a common physical type among members of particular bodies of men who have been assigned specific, demanding tasks (today, for instance, paratroopers and similar soldiers). A similar order of ideas obviously has nothing in common with a lower racism or with vulgar anti-Semitism, and we believe that it can play a role in the context of values which are compatible with the action of a state of a hierarchical and traditional character.

[NOTE: We recalled above that anti-Semitism has existed in all times. In the Christian era it had a religious character, but it would be difficult to explain the constant aversion the same peoples nourished for the Hebrew based only upon the religious factor, without also introducing the factor of character. Modern anti-Semitism, on the other hand, has had a social basis. It can be traced back to the reaction provoked by the fact that Jews, who stick together in tight solidarity, have succeeded in ensuring themselves a pre-eminent position in the intellectual, economic and professional fields in various countries according to ratios that have no relationship to the actual proportion of the Jewish group in relation to the whole 'Aryan' population of the nations concerned (see *Notes on the Third Reich*, Chapter IV). If we want to be impartial, however, it is not fair to assert the simplistic social situation with which the appeal to 'race' could be reduced to a pretext for 'Get up! I want to sit there.' We would first need to define what it means to be Jewish (Judaism as an inner or spiritual race) and, aside from their numerical proportions in key positions, demonstrate that in individual cases, this way of being gives a special, undesirable direction to the relevant activity, perhaps even without the person in question being aware of it. Naturally 'race', in this sense — Judaism — has nothing to do with religion. Conversion to Christianity changes it as little as a similar conversion could change the constitution, heredity and innate dispositions of a Negro. This consideration explains the importance of the concept of inner race, that is, to prevent every one-sidedness. With reference to this, however, we have had the opportunity to state that today, anti-Jewish polemic makes little sense, given that the qualities that can be, perhaps, deprecated in Jews are found in the so-called 'Aryans' to no less a degree, without having the excuse of hereditary precedents. Speaking of American capitalism and considering the traditional relationship of Jews with trade, money and interest,

Werner Sombart[21] could say, similarly, that to the degree that the Jew emancipated himself and rose in the modern epoch, to the same degree he transmitted his own mentality to the non-Hebrew.]

While we acknowledge the factors we mentioned and their related situations, and in particular remembering the arbitrary nature of a one-sided identification of racism with anti-Semitic fanaticism, we should not therefore consider the racist (if we insist on using this term) aspect of Fascism as an aberration, as imitation, or as a 'foreign body'.

In this context we could also make a general retrospective consideration concerning the entire Fascist experience. The intrinsic value of an idea and a system should be judged in itself, without all that enters into the world of contingency. The decisive factor, however, practically and historically, is the quality of the men who make themselves the affirmers and defenders of this idea and this system. If this quality is inferior, the intrinsic value of the principles will be of little help — and *vice versa*. It can happen that a system that is defective and has serious theoretical faults can function in a satisfying manner, at least for a certain period, when run by a qualified group and qualified leaders. This is the importance possessed by these values of 'race', in the generalised sense of spirit and character, and not the purely biological sense. We have spoken of this issue a while ago.

Granted this, we need to ask ourselves up to what point the negative side presented by Fascism, or which existed behind Fascism's ideological façade and revealed itself at the moment when Fascism was tested, should be referred, essentially, to the human factor. We shall not be afraid to turn the thesis of a certain anti-Fascism on its head in order to affirm that it was not Fascism that negatively affected the Italian people, the 'Italian race', but *vice versa*. It was this people, this 'race' that negatively affected Fascism, that is, the Fascist experiment, insofar as Italy could not furnish a sufficient number of men who could rise to the challenge of certain high demands and symbols, men who were healthy elements and able to promote the development of the positive potential that could have been contained in the Fascist system. This deficiency must also be taken into consideration in regard to really free men who could have worked, not outside Fascism or against it, but inside it. There was a lack of men who were capable of saying clearly and fearlessly to Mussolini what needed to be said, to make him understand what it was important that he understand, instead of indulging him in wishful thinking in accordance with his desires. (A notable

[21] Evola is referring to his work, The Jews and Modern Capitalism (London: T. F. Unwin, 1913).

case is what Mussolini was led to believe about the effective industrial and military potential of Italy to enter the war.) Of course, there were some men like this during the Twenty Years, but not enough of them. He should have asserted the ancient Roman maxim that a true leader does not want to be the boss of slaves, but to have at his side free men who follow him — to correct the mental dispositions that almost fatally tend to prevail, through human weakness, in anyone who holds power, and which encourage sycophancy. More generally, what must we think of the foundations on which Fascism rested in part, of the human material it had at its disposal, when we see the ease with which the hysterical popular masses disappeared like snow in the Sun, when the wind changed direction, and when we consider the number of ex-Fascists today who, accordingly, do not hesitate to declare that in the preceding period they were in bad faith, were acting out of mere conformism or opportunism, or had been brainwashed? The charge, in our opinion, should be brought in large measure against the 'Italian race'. We must come to the conclusion, which gives us little comfort, of their refractory character in regard to everything that can be regarded as alien to its 'tradition', making Fascism appear as a dark parenthesis, and the return to 'democracy' with all the rest (due only to the enemy's victory) as a 'second *Risorgimento*', with the complete separation from everything that can enter into the circle of the political and governmental ideals of a true Right.

As the reader has seen, throughout our critical discrimination in the area of doctrine, we have essentially referred to the Fascism of the Twenty Years. From the second Fascism, the Fascism of the Salò Republic, we believe that very little can be gathered in this regard, since too many contingent factors influenced what it presented as a first draft of state, political and social doctrine, and what was presented suffered from a complete lack of a period of calm maturation. Its value is to be found in its combatant and legionary aspect. As someone correctly observed, its value stands in the fact that, perhaps for the first time in all Italian history, the second Fascism saw a significant mass of Italians consciously choose the path of fighting in lost positions, of sacrifice and unpopularity in order to obey the principle of fidelity to a leader and military honour. In this sense, it rose from what resisted a test of fire. Beyond any ideology and party spirit — we want to emphasise this point — from the purely moral and existential point of view, we can say that it is with the second Fascism that the 'Italian race' in this crisis gave a positive account of itself by associating itself with everything that the simple Italian soldier, in a regular military division or in the battalions of the Blackshirt, could give on the battlefields.

[NOTE: On 28 September 1943, the journal Politica Nuova published an article with the title 'Considerations Concerning the Facts about Italy', which Mussolini caused to be republished as a pamphlet for mass distribution, indicating that he shared the ideas expressed in it. The article was a kind of self-criticism of certain aspects of Fascism and the weaknesses that existed inside it. Some accusations deserve to be reproduced here. The article accused the political class of the regime 'of having formed an increasingly thick barrier between Mussolini and the Fascist masses so that the Duce could not notice other possible collaborators. Therefore every Fascist of any worth was considered positively dangerous if he had contacts with the Duce, and was literally persecuted until he was convinced to return to obscurity or, if he resisted, until he was politically pulverised'. The second accusation is 'of having adopted the method of changing the guard in rotation, in a narrow and hermetic system of political complicity and material interests in the managerial sectors of the regime; of having abused Mussolini's trust to the extent of often hiding from him and falsifying to him the situation of the regime and the mood of the country even at the most critical hours, casting upon the shoulders of the Duce the responsibility, or even the initiative of provisions and directives that did not belong to him'. We should remember all this when we hear people claim, 'The lesson of Italian Fascism shows us the dangers and limitations of a man isolated by his own power' or 'the insufficiency and danger of pure Caesarism which Fascism was reduced to at the end' (M. Bardèche).[22] We must not neglect the part that the Italian human substance played in good measure here, which we have indicated, with attitudes that were quite different from those that were required by the strict idea of an Order—the only corrective for this isolation.

Again, this article, concerning the war, made the accusation of 'having first compromised the conduct of the war, notwithstanding the abundant exercises of a shoddy rhetorical patriotism, and having then caused the military catastrophe through the natural avoidance of every supreme test that could not so much compromise the fate of the nation, but disturb the fate of the lifestyles of its people, which was until then prosperous and tranquil'.

To have an acknowledgment of all this, even when it was too late, is noteworthy.]

[22] Maurice Bardèche (1907-1998) was a French writer who supported fascism internationally during the 1930s, but refused to support the Vichy government of France under German occupation. Robert Brasillach, one of the most prominent French intellectuals who supported Vichy, was his brother-in-law. Throughout the remainder of his life, he sought a resurrection of the fascist ideal in Europe.

XII

Some final considerations should be dedicated to the Fascist idea insofar as it was a factor in the alliances and constellations of world political forces.

In the first place, it is possible to indicate the possible counterpart to the developments in Italian foreign policy that led to Italy's rapprochement with Germany, the Rome-Berlin Axis, and finally to the so-called 'Tripartite Pact'[1] at the start of the Second World War.

Even in this regard, the judgment of various people who are not anti-Fascist in principle suffers from a kind of complex. We should not, however, hide the fact that in Italy, aside from high-level diplomatic activities, the rapprochement with Germany was not very popular. An earlier ideology that ended by influencing the feelings of various strata of the nation played a role in this. From a certain 'patriotic history' of Masonic-liberal confection and inspired by the *Risorgimento*, the German (accompanied, moreover, by the Austrian) has been depicted as a sort of age-old enemy of the Italian people. (The mystifications of this history reached the point of absurdly attributing a 'national' significance to the revolt of the communes against the Holy Roman Empire[2] and its representative, Friedrich II.)[3] Aside from that, however, we need to think about everything that derived from the inability of the Italian 'matter' to endure the 'form' that Fascism wanted to impress upon it.

We have mentioned the real affinities that existed in orientation and typical virtues between Sparta, ancient Rome and the German stocks. On the other hand, there is a clear difference between the Roman and the 'Latin' and, in part, the Italian as a temperament, style and worldview. To the degree to which Fascism returned to the Roman symbol, trying to ensure a reformation of its politics and ethics, it was natural that it would attempt a revision both of the 'Latin' myth and of the anti-German one. About the first, Mussolini could speak of 'bastard brotherhoods'. In

[1] The Tripartite Pact was a military alliance between Germany, Italy and Japan that was signed on 27 September 1940.

[2] The communes were city-states which retained a degree of independence from their rulers in the Holy Roman Empire. In the 1240s, some of the Italian communes sided with the Guelphs in the opposition of Pope Innocent IV to the Emperor, with great success.

[3] Frederick II (1194-1250) was Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, and he was supported by the Ghibellines.

regard to the second, in the qualities of discipline, order, military capacity, love for authority and seriousness presented by the peoples of Central Europe, especially with reference to the Prussian ideal, he had to notice that these were closer to what belonged also to the ancient Roman character in its best or primitive period, while they were far from those that had come to prevail in the substance of the Latin peoples, and therefore also of the Italian people, in its individualist, undisciplined, careless and petit bourgeois aspects, given the penchant of Italy for tourists, mandolins, gondoliers, museums, ruins, 'O Sole Mio', and so on, despite a background of humble, hardworking folk who are loyal to their old customs. [NOTE: On this, see our book *Men Among the Ruins*, Chapter XIV.]

Thus, from the point of view of ideals, we can perfectly well speak of intrinsic affinities. Making Italy 'Roman' and Fascist (wherever we can give a positive sense to the second term — and in this regard, we ought to remember all the reservations formulated in the course of the present essay) could be the same as, to a certain degree, giving it a Prussian stamp. As for political orientation, Italian history could offer a precedent in the Ghibelline[4] movement, which had Dante among its advocates, and who were the exponents of a large part of the Italian nobles of the epoch. It is flabbergasting that during the period of the Axis, Fascism never made use of the Ghibelline myth, perhaps because of the intellectual background and social origins of Mussolini and all those who were close to him.

It follows from these considerations that the diplomatic dealings with Germany that led to the Rome-Berlin Axis could have met a positive response with a less contingent, deeper and more vocational character on the level of ideals. [NOTE: For the Tripartite Pact we could point out another basis for elective affinities,[5] since in Japan (at that time) the nation was held to be founded on an Emperor who ruled by divine right, as well as on the samurai (the warrior nobility) and their ethic. But

[4] Ghibelline is a thirteenth century term which was originally coined to name the supporters of the imperial power of the Hohenstaufen throne against Papal authority. They were in conflict with the Guelphs, who favoured the rule of the Pope. Evola saw this conflict as highlighting the distinction between priestly and royal authority in the state, since he believed the Ghibelline view to be the only valid one from a traditional perspective. He discusses this at length in Revolt Against the Modern World and The Mystery of the Grail.

[5] 'Elective affinities' was originally a scientific term, referring to the fact that chemicals display a preference to combine with certain other chemicals, and not with others. Goethe later adopted this term to refer to the same phenomenon in human relationships, explaining why individuals prefer to relate with certain people rather than others. Goethe's third novel, which uses the term as its title, explores this phenomenon, and this is also the way in which Evola uses it.

obviously in this regard, there was no direct relation granted the great diversities of race, history and environment.] At the same time, however, the response to the Axis reveals the inmost feelings found in part of the 'Italian race', and even various exponents of Fascism (a typical case: Galeazzo Ciano):[6] the intolerance of, resistance to and lack of sympathy for the rapprochement with Germany. We do not wish, however, to insist on seeing only one side of the issue. Thus, to explain the rapprochement there are other factors to take into consideration, such as the two nations' concrete common interests, the personal sympathy between the two 'dictators', and the affinities between the two movements, Fascism and National Socialism, on the basis of their populist aspects, on which we have already expressed our judgment. Nonetheless, the fact remains that Mussolini was particularly impressed by the fact that in Hitler's Germany, there was a clear continuation of the German and Prussian ethic, tradition and conception of the state.

On the other hand, a direct consequence of the nature of the doctrine and worldview affirmed by Fascism was a natural opposition to both the world of the Western democracies and capitalism (the extreme expression of which is embodied by the United States) and the world of Communism and Soviet Russia — to use contemporary terminology, both 'West' and 'East'. Therefore, the military alignment of Italy in the Second World War proceeded in principle from the logic of Fascist ideology and the values it affirmed. In theory, there is nothing to object to in this.

Considerations of a different sort that could be made about the war would take us away from our theme. We have already indicated that it would be illegitimate to draw any conclusion from the war's outcome about the intrinsic value of the ideology that led Italy to participate in it alongside Germany and under the banner of the Tripartite Pact. The problem to pose, not only for Italy, but also and especially for Germany, would be that of the degree to which the war was conducted with precise knowledge of the possibilities and a sense of limits. Of course, hindsight has 20/20 vision. It cannot be denied that after the collapse of the Western front of the Allies, and with only England still resisting in the midst of a desperate situation and awaiting an invasion, only a minority could doubt that the game was about to end with a decisive victory for Germany and foresee that Italy, through her intervention, would

[6] Galeazzo Ciano (1903-1944) was the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and was Mussolini's son-in-law. He opposed Italy's involvement in the Second World War, and voted in favour of Mussolini's dismissal from office in 1943. After being dismissed from his post by the Badoglio government, Ciano attempted to resettle in Germany, but the Germans turned him over to the Italian Social Republic, where he was executed for treason.

instead become involved in events that Mussolini could not have the power to control and check in any way.

(We should not forget that Mussolini had done his best to prevent the outbreak of the Second World War at the last moment with an initiative that found no good will, especially from France. We should not forget, in addition, that Mussolini had earlier proposed the formation of the 'Quadripartite Pact'[7] — an understanding involving Germany, England, Italy and France — a formula that could have had a fundamental European importance, but which clashed with the ideological biases and the narrow horizons of the proposed partners.)

Moreover, we believe that even if, as we have said, by and large and in the abstract, the fronts of the Second World War appeared ideologically logical, it is also necessary to attribute the dire consequences to a lack of a sense of limits, a fanaticism, and finally an effective megalomania on Hitler's part. In reality, the first cause that led to the conflicts was Hitler's obsession with the myth of the people/race according to the formula of its unity with a single *Reich* and a single *Führer* ('*Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer*').[8] If Germany had limited itself to rising again from the condition to which its defeat in the First World War had brought it and to becoming a great European power again; if, in its rise and expansion, it had had a sense of limit; if it could have stopped, without losing sight of its inevitable adversaries, and waited for conditions that might have been more propitious for acting in isolation against those forces that Hitler instead brought down upon himself all at the same time, dragging Italy with him — the state of Europe today would be very different.

Naturally, that state would be deprecated by different elements that were present in Germany, but even more so in Italy, that warmly hoped for the military defeat of their nation, indeed the nation's ruin, because it would entail the fall of the incumbent governments. [NOTE: Among them was Benedetto Croce.[9] An opponent of Italy's intervention against Germany in the First World War (he said then that one could only bring 'weak rationalisations' against Germany') and an admirer of Hegel, the philosopher of the authoritarian Prussian state, until 1925 a defender of the strong state in Italy, did not hesitate to state publically in the post-war period that he had

[7] The Quadripartite Pact was actually signed by all four nations on 7 June 1933, but the French Parliament refused to ratify it.

[8] German: 'one people, one empire, one leader', a popular slogan of the Third Reich.

[9] Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) was a highly influential Italian art critic, senator, and a philosopher in the German Idealist tradition. He initially supported Italian Fascism, but by 1925 he had become an opponent of the regime.

desired the enemy's victory in the Second World War, and had favoured it 'with thought, sentiment and action', because he had understood that the Allies were not conducting 'a simple war of political and economic interests, but a war of religion' [*sic*]—as General Eisenhower did not hesitate to call the war in Europe a 'crusade'. There is only the small problem that the atheist Soviet Union figured among the Allies, and indeed played a decisive part in the outcome of the war, a nation committed to combat every religion as the 'opium of the people' and as a 'counterrevolutionary' factor. After Italy's collapse, like various anti-Fascists, Croce expressed bitter repentances, which have naturally been greeted with silence by those who today exalt Croce the anti-Fascist.] And unfortunately, in the events of the Italian war, there is no lack of cases in which it is difficult to say, to this very day, to what extent the lack of preparation and incompetence of certain high commands was connected with sabotage, if not downright treason.

For those who are not in principle anti-Fascist, things should appear in a rather different light. Above all, we should not exclude the possibility of corrective developments that, once the war was won, could have taken place in the two regimes to the extent of causing their positive aspects to prevail. Especially, there could have been the contribution of the fighting spirit of the veterans. As the veterans of the First World War reacted against the political and social climate they found on their return to their home country and so gave rise to a renovating movement, it would be equally probable that elements tempered in the new war would, upon their return, have caused a renovation of the regimes' cadres, accompanied by the elimination of various negative aspects of the system and various individual traits while the basic ideas remained.

There is the well-known propaganda which has been organised in unprecedented proportions that, especially concerning Germany, presents everything that happened in the period before and during the war as a unique ensemble of evil ideas, degraded policies and horrors, with special attention given to the German Gestapo and the Italian OVRA (Organization for Vigilance and the Repression of Anti-Fascism),[10] the concentration camps and so on, with all the exaggerations, illegitimate generalisations, and sometimes downright inventions that are useful for that purpose. We have no intention of asserting that everything was in order then, and various things deserve to be severely condemned and deprecated. But every revolution or war has had its dark side, and there is no reason why those things

[10] The Italian secret police, an organisation which was created in 1927.

should be held against the Third Reich alone that are willingly passed over in silence by the interested parties in regard to, let us say, the European wars of religion, the French Revolution, or the Bolshevik Revolution that led to the Soviet regime. The method of ascribing to one's adversaries every horror and crime, while hiding or denying one's own, is well-known, but has never been so systematically and impudently applied as during and after the Second World War. Remembering all that we have said about possible later corrections and normalisations of the system, we can say that no price would have been too high, supposing the war had proven victorious by some miracle (given the enormous disproportion of the material forces that decided it) and had the following results: breaking the backbone of Soviet Russia and very likely provoking the crisis of Communism itself (instead of the Communist takeover of all the European countries on the other side of the 'Iron Curtain' and the current Cold War between 'East' and 'West' that, for good or ill, is still going on); humiliating the United States and expelling it from European politics (instead of a Western Europe that, in its own defence, is more or less at the mercy of the United States and its presidents); crippling British power but certainly, despite the probability that some of its colonies would have fallen into other hands, to a much lesser degree than happened to 'victorious' England, which has seen its empire broken up (exactly the same thing that happened to 'victorious' France); preventing, when it was still possible, the Communist takeover of China as a result of the victory of Japan, instead of the rise of a new, powerful and very dangerous home in Asia for worldwide subversion; impeding the insurrection of coloured peoples and the end of European hegemony, because never — and again never — in the 'New Order', under the banner of the ideas defended by the peoples of the Axis, would there have been a place for the self-destructive psychosis of anti-colonialism, nor could that revolt have counted on help from the Soviet Union. All people with sentiments that are not necessarily 'Fascist', but who are of the Right, when they allow their imagination to dwell on such possibilities and overcome their current prejudices, have no choice but to draw up a balance sheet and adequately measure the distance that separates them from what instead presents itself to our eyes as the current world situation.

XIII

After these few considerations, we can end our examination, which, although brief, can perhaps furnish the basis for a critical judgment on the structures and meaning of Fascism from a point of view that is different from either a confused and one-sided exaltation or an *a priori* denigration. The essential task is to introduce criteria that may lead beyond the rather restricted horizon found in one or the other of these two points of view.

On this topic, it is relevant to discuss the unusual character of the 'exceptional' laws that have been promulgated in Italy against Fascism and the defence of Fascism and that are still in force, although admittedly in a somewhat revised form.

We can admit that a 'democracy' may defend itself with legislative measures, if we are referring to a procedural political form, but not to a dogmatic and univocal doctrinal system, because in this second case the 'definitions' of democracy are multiple and discordant and because, above all, we would find ourselves before a singular contradiction. However paradoxical it could seem, democratic 'freedom of opinion' should entail the admission of the legitimacy of professing and defending even anti-democratic ideas, if it is not to create a regime of bullying and tyranny, although with the flag turned upside down. (Anyhow, more than one writer has noted that few regimes are as intolerant and fanatic as the ones that proclaim 'liberty'.)

What democracy as method can have the right to combat would be only a praxis intended to conquer power and gain control of the state by violent means and direct action. To the degree that the legislation we mentioned aimed only at this by prosecuting the reconstruction of the Fascist Party as a crime, there would be nothing to object to. (We should not forget, however, that in Italy, Fascism ultimately came to power by an invitation to form a government made by the sovereign, and in Germany, Nazism paved its way by a parliamentary and plebiscitary majority.)

When, however, the legislation we are talking about has proposed not only to suppress certain outer manifestations (the Fascist salute, black shirts, Fascist hymns, etc.), but also to punish the 'defence of Fascism' as a crime, we have the juridical absurdity of fixing the punishment without first rigorously defining the terms of the crime — in our case: defining rigorously, above all, what we must understand by 'Fascism' and 'Fascist'. But this absurdity derives from a factual impossibility. In fact, it will appear very clear to those who have followed us up to this point that those who

would like to condemn or attack Fascism as a whole would find themselves compelled also to condemn ideas and principles that did not belong only to Fascism, but were important in other, earlier systems as well. In these terms, it would be necessary to define as more or less 'Fascist' the greater part of the states that history describes from distant ages, when they are based on a principle of authority and hierarchy and admit nothing similar to absolute democracy, liberalism or socialism.

To be intellectually coherent and to avoid demonstrating an open bias, serious legislation for a democracy's self-defence would have to proceed in another way: it would have to begin from a definition of a general system that is constitutionally unacceptable, of which 'Fascism' (obviously Fascism in certain of its aspects) is only a particular case, a system that, if you prefer, could also be called 'totalitarian' in the worse sense, as we have already explained. The definition ought to have a rigorously structural and objective character, without labels. But everyone can see that the first victim of serious legislation imposed on such a basis would have to be Communism, and the law would lead to the immediate dissolution and banning of the Communist Party in a democratic state. This is exactly what the United States did,[1] and earlier on the Federal Republic of Germany in Bonn,[2] with greater coherence than we have shown.

The fact is, however, that legislation was passed against Fascism in Italy without introducing as its precise counterpart an even stricter legislation against Communism and Communist propaganda. (Everyone knows everything that can be charged to the Communist Party, as an activist organisation which trains its forces, possesses deposits of arms and networks of 'cells', receives foreign financing, and so on. These activities call for measures very different from those enacted against the much-feared 'reconstruction of the Fascist Party'.) This fact shows that we are facing an orientation determined not by a rigorous juridical thought, but by a partisan spirit, and a democracy that is in reality subject to the forces of the Left and Communism, which, as is known, ranks among its tactics using democracy so as to later bury the same democracy, by taking advantage of the foolishness, infatuation and cowardice of democracy's representatives.

If this partisan spirit, this foolishness and infatuation in contemporary Italy had not reached the limit of real irresponsibility, it would be natural to acknowledge the

[1] The United States never actually banned Communism, but Evola is probably referring to the efforts of the House Committee on Un-American Activities to stem Communism, beginning in 1947.

[2] The West German government banned the Communist Party of Germany in 1956, although it was reconstituted in 1968 under a different name.

importance of the rise and organisation of a national movement as an antidote to a sickness that is now widespread and lurking in all the structures of the country. Two eminent sociologists, Pareto and Mosca,[3] have correctly emphasised that after the rise of an industrialised mass society, with a large-scale development of public services, the modern state finds itself dangerously paralysed in the means by which it previously defended its authority. In an emergency situation, the trade union organisations and, in general, that of the mass of workers, would only need to issue an appeal for strikes and sabotage to block the entire national organism. The police force and even the army would not be able to respond effectively. Given the point the Communist cancer has now reached in Italy, it would seem clearly advisable to establish a national movement that could gradually create a pervasive network intended to rapidly furnish elements to confront this group everywhere — in factories, public services, offices, and so on — in emergency cases. Its purpose would be especially, and first of all, defending the state and the state's authority (even when it is an 'empty state') against disruptive public demonstrations, not the negation of both state and authority. The importance that a movement of the Right would have in these terms seems, however, to escape the present managers of democratic Italy — a political class far worse than all its predecessors — who acknowledge only the psychosis of 'Fascism' and can only come up with 'extraordinary laws' of which we have already indicated all their superficiality and one-sidedness.

* * *

We said at the beginning that, if we could not be asked to expound here a complete political doctrine of the Right, even this critical examination might furnish, step by step, some reference points. We believe that this has been done. The result, however, will perhaps be disconcerting for many readers. It will be necessary, in fact, to measure the distance between an intransigent political doctrine of the Right and everything that exists today on the level of both political reality and ideology. Aside from the national movement we just discussed, which would have value especially as a work force for an almost physical defence, we need to ask ourselves what groups or men today would have the courage to take up and defend these positive elements that we have isolated in Fascism without compromise, while also clearly emphasising the

[3] Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941) was an Italian political scientist who particularly studied the role of elites in societies.

monarchical, aristocratic and hierarchical idea, or that which we have elaborated by separating out the negative and sufficiently integrating the positive tasks that needed to be faced under Fascism.

As things stand today, there is good reason to think that a critical examination like the one attempted in the preceding pages has a purely theoretical significance. It can be of interest only because, as far as we know, no one, not only in Italy but also in all of Europe, has undertaken a study of this kind before now, which is separated from partisan passions and from everything that reflects the world of contingency and which adheres to often forgotten ideas of a higher tradition. For what concerns not a simple testimony, but also a practical decision, perhaps things could appear otherwise only in the desirable eventuality that things reach a real crisis, instead of a definitive collapse achieved by those means that democratic legality puts at the disposal of the forces of worldwide subversion. In such a crisis, by a reaction of the national organism analogous to the reactions that sometimes occur unexpectedly in an individual physical organism when its vital forces are threatened, the only alternatives that could materialise would be the ones predicted by Donoso Cortès and mentioned by us, the choice between 'absolute negations' and 'sovereign affirmations'. Nothing, however, allows us to pronounce on all this today, when every single practical goal is foreign to the motivation behind the present essay.

As the conclusion of the present essay we can indicate, in summary, what are the most essential traits of the type of state and regime that could be defined starting from a movement with a 'Fascist' character, which would overcome the various oscillations and confusions present in earlier reconstructive currents in a direction that is decisively of the Right. As a reference point we should, however, consider not what Italian Fascism and similar movements were in their factual reality, that is, in their simple, unrepeatable 'historicity'. What in 'Fascism' survives, and which retains its value and relevance, are its potentialities — as someone correctly said, it is what 'it could have and ought to have been', if certain conditions had been realised.

The clear stance against every form of democracy and socialism is the first characteristic of the state of which we spoke. It will put an end to the stupid infatuation, cowardice and hypocrisy of those who today chatter of 'democracy', who proclaim democracy, who exalt democracy. Democracy is only a regressive, crepuscular phenomenon.

The true state will then be oriented against both capitalism and Communism. At its centre will stand a principle of authority and a transcendent symbol of sovereignty.

The most natural incarnation of such a symbol is the monarchy. The need to confer a chrism on this transcendence is of fundamental importance.

Monarchy is not incompatible with a 'legal dictatorship', more or less as it was in ancient Roman law.[4] The sovereign can confer exceptional unitary powers on a person of special stature and qualification, still on a legal basis, when there are special situations to overcome or exceptional tasks to confront.

We can accept the formula of 'authoritarian constitutionalism'. It entails overcoming the fetish and mythology of the so-called 'rule of law'. Law is not born from anything perfectly formed, nor with characteristics of eternal, immutable validity. At the origin of every law stands a relationship of force. This power that is at the origin of every law can intervene, suspending and modifying the current structures when the situation demands it, attesting with this action that there still exists in the political organism a will and a sovereignty, that it is not reduced to something abstract, mechanical and soulless.

The state is the primary element that precedes nation, people and 'society'. The state — and with the state everything that is properly constituted as political order and political reality — is defined essentially on the basis of an idea, not by naturalistic and contractual factors.

Not a social contract,[5] but relations of loyalty and obedience, of free subordination and honour, are the bases of the true state, which does not acknowledge demagoguery and populism.

The true state is organic and unified without being 'totalitarian'. The relations we are discussing allow for the possibility of a large margin of decentralisation. Liberty and partial autonomy stand in relation to loyalty and responsibility according to a precise reciprocity. When these relations are broken, the power that is concentrated at the centre, manifesting its own nature, will therefore intervene with a severity and harshness in proportion to the liberty that was conceded.

The true state does not acknowledge the system of parliamentary democracy and party rule (*partitocrazia*). It can admit only corporative representations that are

[4] In ancient Rome, the Senate had the ability to appoint a dictator in an emergency situation involving a war within the state itself. This dictator was invested with absolute political and military power, including over the Senate itself. The position only continued until the crisis had passed.

[5] The idea of the social contract, which was instrumental in the development of modern democracy, is that individuals surrender some of their personal freedom to their political leaders, as well as to society as a whole, in return for the benefits and defense of their other liberties that are offered by living in the society.

differentiated and articulated through a Lower or Corporative House. Above that will stand an Upper House as an extraordinary tribunal to guarantee the pre-eminence of the political principal, and having higher goals which are not only material and short-term.

It will be necessary to take a resolute stance against the aberrant system of indiscriminate universal suffrage and 'one man, one vote' which now includes the female sex. The formula of 'politicising the masses' should be rejected. The majority of a healthy and ordered nation should not be involved in politics. The Fascist trinity, 'authority, order and justice',[6] retains its unshaken validity for the true state.

The political party, which is a necessary organ for a movement in a period of transition and struggle, should not be replaced by a 'single party' once power is conquered and the system is stabilised. Its quite different task will be to establish something like an Order, which will participate in the dignity and authority concentrated in the centre, and assume some of the functions that in earlier, traditional regimes belonged to the nobility as a political class in key positions of the state (for example in the army and the diplomatic corps). The premise of this class was a stricter ethic and a special lifestyle. This nucleus will also act as the guardian of the idea of the state, and will prevent the 'caesarean' isolation of whoever exercises the supreme authority.

The sphere of politics and power should be, by its very nature and function, free from economic influences, influences by economic groups or special interests. It is appropriate to recall the statement of Sulla,[7] who said that his ambition was not to possess gold, but to hold power over those who possess it.

The corporative reform should take place within the concrete world of labour and production, that is, in the businesses, through a new, organic structuring of them and a decisive elimination of class spirit, class struggle, and the different mentalities that call themselves 'capitalist', proletarian or Marxist. The trade union movement must be rejected. It is the greatest tool of all the subversive movements of recent times, and is the real cancer of the democratic state. As in the Fascist conception, it will be the state's task to act as referee, moderator and decider in the case of conflicts and disruptions. The objectivity and rigour of this higher court, which needs to be made concrete in adequate structures, will allow the abolition of the tool of the strike.

[6] A popular slogan of the Fascists.

[7] Lucius Cornelius Sulla (c. 138 -78 BCE) was a Roman general who served as consul of the Roman Republic twice, as well as dictator. He was particularly noted for having voluntarily given up the powers of dictator and restoring the constitutional government.

The abuses of strikes, their use for blackmail and the other purposes for which they are used, which are more often political than social and economic, have become increasingly obvious and indefensible.

The defence of the principle of true justice will entail denouncing what is today continually promoted as 'social justice', a justice that serves only the lowest classes of society (the so-called 'working classes') and works to the detriment of other classes, effectively leading to injustice. The true state will also be hierarchical, especially because it will be able to acknowledge and create respect for the hierarchy of true values, giving primacy to values of a higher order, not material or utilitarian ones, and admitting relevant, legitimate inequalities or differences of social positions, opportunities and dignity. The true state will reject as aberrant the formula of the state of labour, whether or not this state is presented as 'national'.

The vital condition of every true state is a well-defined climate: the climate of the highest possible tension, but not of forced agitation. It will be desirable that everyone stay at his post, that he takes pleasure in an activity in conformity with his own nature and vocation, which is therefore free and desired for itself before considering utilitarian purposes and the unhealthy desire to live above one's proper condition. If it is not possible to ask everyone to follow an 'ascetic and military vision of life', it will be possible to aim at a climate of concentrated intensity, of personal life, that will encourage people to prefer a greater margin of liberty, as opposed to comfort and prosperity paid for with the consequent limitation of liberty through the evitable economic and social influences. Autarchy, in the terms we have emphasised, is a valid Fascist formula. A course of virile, measured austerity is also valid and, finally, an internal discipline through which one develops a taste and an anti-bourgeois orientation of life, but no schoolmarmish and impertinent intrusion by what is public into the field of private life. Here, too, the principle should be liberty connected with equal responsibility and, in general, giving prominence to the principles of 'great morality' as opposed to the principles of conformist 'little morality'.

In essence, the climate of the true state should be personalising, animating and free. An inner force should produce a potential orbiting of individuals, groups, partial unities and men of an Order around a centre. This orbiting is one of which we should acknowledge the 'anagogic' and integrative character. It is integrative also in relation to the fact, which is not at all paradoxical, that true personality is realised only if it is affected by references to what is more than personal. Ultimately on this plane, through the rise and life of the true state, 'imponderables' come into play, as though

predestined, because no oppressive and direct initiative can create and maintain this kind of climate.

In the context of a similar state, and under the sign of a relevant conception of life, a people can develop and achieve a calm, an internal force and a stability which does not mean stasis or stagnation, but rather the equilibrium of a concentrated power that, when the call is made, can cause everyone to rise immediately to their feet and makes them capable of absolute commitment and irresistible action.

A doctrine of the state can only propose values to test the elective affinities and the dominant or latent vocations of a nation. If a people cannot or does not want to acknowledge the values that we have called 'traditional', and which define a true Right, it deserves to be left to itself. At most, we can point out to it the illusions and suggestions of which it has been or is the victim, which are due to a general action which has often been systematically organised, and to regressive processes. If not even this leads to a sensible result, this people will suffer the fate that it has created, by making use of its 'liberty'.

NOTES ON
THE THIRD REICH

Foreword

In 1964, Julius Evola published *Fascism: Essay of a Critical Analysis from the Point of View of the Right*,[1] a critical discussion of the *Ventennio*, the 'Twenty Years' of Fascist rule in Italy (28 October 1922-25 July 1943) from the perspective of the Integral Traditionalism of which he was one of the main exponents. For the second edition of 1970, which appeared under the shorter and wittier title, *Fascism Viewed from the Right*,[2] he composed a parallel analysis of the German Third Reich. The present book was prepared as an appendix consisting of a parallel analysis of the German Third Reich. Evola had always maintained a principled distance from official Fascism, an attitude that was reciprocated by most mainstream Fascist leaders. (The exceptions were significant, however: Roberto Farinacci, Fascist boss (*ras*) of Cremona, and Benito Mussolini himself.) In *Fascism Viewed from the Right* Evola argued that some of the key tenets of Fascism were good and consistent with the traditional principles of the True Right. Among these principles is a conception of the state, which places it over the people and the nation, which are created by the state. This view of the state is consistent not only with hierarchy, but also with a subsidiary or federalist philosophy. An authoritative state is strong enough to encourage decisions to be made at the lowest appropriate level. In this view, politics are superior to economics, which is a tool the state uses for the good of the nation it has created and is shaping. For Evola, the failure of Fascism was not due to the loss of the Second World War, which was the result only of the contingencies of its historical circumstances, and certainly not to its principles, but to the weaknesses of the Italian people, who had been demoralised by generations of living under a regime founded on the radical principles of the French Revolution and nineteenth century liberalism and radicalism, the 'Immortal Principles' of 1789 and 1848.

Evola's view of National Socialism and the Third Reich was virtually the reverse. He detested the principles of Hitler's regime, especially its emphasis on one leader and its centralising policies that undermined and subverted Germany's long traditions of federalism. Evola also objected to the idea that race was the foundation of the nation and the people the basis of the state. Evola's objections to National

[1] Il fascismo: saggio di una analisi critica dal punto di vista della destra (Rome: G. Volpe, 1964).
[2] Il fascismo visto dalla destra; Note sul terzo Reich (Rome: G. Volpe, 1974).

Socialist views of race were based on a principled objection to biological reductionism, which he argued was a materialist vision that ignored the reality that, unlike thoroughbred horses or dogs of different breeds, humans are soul and spirit (or character and openness to the transcendent) as well as, actually much more than, body, flesh and bones. After the Second World War, Evola denounced in the strongest terms the practical results of Nazi racism, not only for the terrible loss of life involved but also for its subversion of the rule of law on the basis of a misuse of modern science, which Evola distrusted on principle.

On the other hand, Evola admired Germany and German culture and felt that the traditions of hierarchy, federalism and a state based on traditional orders, traditions found throughout central Europe and especially in Prussia, still existed in the period between the two World Wars and could have survived Nazism and provided the basis for the restoration of what was traditional and vital in Europe. Evola discusses the reasons for his beliefs in *Notes on the Third Reich*, but he also had other reasons to admire the Germans and the German culture that influenced him, although he does not discuss them in this work.

German aristocrats and intellectuals in the 1930s welcomed and celebrated Evola's views and works much more enthusiastically than he ever experienced in Italy at any stage of his life. In the 1920s Evola had moved from flirting with Dadaism to developing a worldview on the basis of Indian, Far Eastern and ancient Mediterranean traditions under the influence of René Guénon and Arturo Reghini. He tried out his ideas in *Critica Fascista*, a journal edited by the Fascist intellectual, Giuseppe Bottai, who had served in the army with Evola in the First World War. Evola then published them as a book in 1928, *Imperialismo Pagano* (Pagan Imperialism).[3] Evola argued that Fascism was consistent with the great Roman traditions, but not with Christianity and especially the contemporary Catholic Church, whose commitment to universalism was fundamentally inconsistent with Fascist goals. The book caused a lively debate that included Fascists and Catholics. With the Concordat of 1929, by which the Vatican recognised the legitimacy of the Italian state for the first time since 1870 and Catholicism was publically recognised as the official religion of Italy, the debate ended and Bottai cut his ties with Evola.

The situation was quite different in Germany. In 1933 Evola published a significantly expanded German translation, *Heidnischer Imperialismus* (Heathen

[3] Julius Evola, Imperialismo Pagano (Rome: Atanòr, 1928); cited from Imperialismo Pagano nelle edizioni italiana e tedesca (Rome: Edizioni Mediterranee, 2004). English translation: (Kemper, France: Thompkins & Cariou, 2007).

Imperialism),[4] was greeted with enthusiastic interest in Germany. Evola was invited to speak there and addressed important conservative groups, such as the Berlin Herrenklub. The German translation of his most important work, *Revolt against the Modern World*,[5] in 1935 was received even more enthusiastically with many positive reviews, including one by the German poet, Gottfried Benn.[6] Evola's travels and talks in Germany eventually attracted the attention of the SS. Their report reveals what the German government could make of Evola. After noting that Evola was 'only tolerated by official Fascism,' the report summarised three of his lectures, and concluded, 'The ultimate and secret motivation for Evola's theories and plans must be sought in a revolt of the old aristocracy against today's world, which is totally alienated from the upper class. This confirms the initial German impression: that we are dealing with a "reactionary Roman." … His political plans for a Roman-Germanic Imperium are of a utopian character, and moreover very apt to cause ideological confusions. Since Evola is also only tolerated and barely supported by Fascism, it is tactically not necessary to accommodate his tendencies from our side.' A memo dated 8 August 1938 reports that Himmler himself 'has acknowledged the report regarding the lectures of Baron Evola and is in full agreement with the thoughts and recommendations stated in the last paragraph thereof,' which recommend ignoring Evola and discouraging his influence in Germany.[7]

Official Nazism had as little use for Evola as he had for it. Yet Evola admired German culture and was admired by cultured Germans. The intellectual circles that he moved in are commonly known as the Conservative Revolution, the short-hand term for different groups of radical traditionalists and opponents of liberalism and radicalism whose views and attitudes were, however, quite different from those of the most significant figures and initiatives of Nazi Germany and were consistently marginalized or ignored by the Nazis after they achieved power. The earliest and best academic discussion of this movement and its distinctive characteristics remains Armin Mohler's *The Conservative Revolution in Germany 1918-1933*.[8] Although no major figure in this movement shared Evola's commitment to Integral

[4] Evola, Imperialismo Pagano (2004), pp. 183-293.

[5] English edition: Revolt Against the Modern World (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1995).

[6] Julius Evola, The Path of Cinnabar (London: Arktos, 2010), pp. 152-154.

[7] H. T. Hansen, 'Julius Evola's Political Endeavors,' in Julius Evola, Men Among the Ruins (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2002), pp. 62-63.

[8] Armin Mohler, Die Konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918-1933 (Stuttgart: F. Vorwerk, 1950); cited from 4. Auflage (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994).

Traditionalism, its leading figures were opposed to liberalism and were equally disenchanted by the Nazi regime and (with a few exceptions) played little or no part in official Nazi activities. A brief discussion of this movement, based mainly on Mohler's book, will indicate why Evola's books and lectures were so much more successful in Germany than in Italy.

Mohler argued that the Conservative Revolution and National Socialism were very different. While individual exponents of the Conservative Revolution were active in the Third Reich, they played the parts of 'Trotskyites' and heretics. To the extent that the regime used their ideas after 1933, it converted them into political slogans and stripped them of their original depth and meaning. In fact, the most brilliant writers of the Conservative Revolution were silenced or marginalized during the National Socialist period, such as Oswald Spengler, Ernst Jünger and Gottfried Benn. The regime trusted them as little as it did Evola.

Evola shared the contempt for the bourgeois ethos felt by many of the leaders of the Conservative Revolution. The intellectuals of that movement remembered life under Kaiser Wilhelm II, much as English modernists remembered the Victorian era, as bourgeois and smug. The War changed everything. 'The War is our father,' wrote Ernst Jünger. 'He begat us in the burning embrace of the battlefield trenches as a new race.'[9] After the war the Weimar Republic represented for the Conservative Revolution the last, tired gasp of *Wilhelminismus*, bourgeois and boring. Soldiers returned from the war alienated from old ideas and attitudes. Spiritually, they 'had to seek shelter in houses that their parents had built before the war,' in Jünger's words.[10] In both *Fascism Viewed from the Right* and *Notes on the Third Reich* Evola commented on the important role of veterans in anti-liberal movements in Italy and Germany.

To illustrate the worldview of the Conservative Revolution, Mohler discusses the opposition of the circle and the line. The modern world tends to see historical and personal development as a line. Conservative Revolutionaries reassumed the older idea of the circle. The centrality of this opposition is found in an important influence on both the Conservative Revolution and Evola, like Otto Weininger. The key figure, however, is Friedrich Nietzsche. Mohler's pages on Nietzsche were the first scholarly attempt to rescue Nietzsche from his reputation as a proto-Nazi and re-establish him as the key figure in moving beyond the world of the Enlightenment, liberalism and

[9] Ernst Jünger, quoted by Mohler, Konservative Revolution, p. 33.

[10] Ernst Jünger, Das abenteuerliche Herz (Berlin: Frundsberg, 1929), p. 155. Translated as The Adventurous Heart: Figures and Capriccios (New York: Telos Press, 2012).

socialism. (At the same time, Walter Kaufmann was rescuing Nietzsche in the English-speaking world.)[11]

'Ich bin kein Mensch, ich bin Dynamit,' Nietzsche wrote in *Ecce Homo*.[12] His insight that God is dead for modern man led to his vision of nihilism, which is overcome by the Eternal Return and the positive revaluing of all values as humans move on to the next stage of human development. Amid the wreckage left by the World War, proponents of the Conservative Revolution consistently predicted the beginning of a new age, which would replace bourgeois liberalism and proletarian Communism. 'We are standing at a turning point in history as significant as the change from the Stone Age to the age of metals,' Ernst Jünger wrote.[13] This new age would be a true Renaissance, a rebirth of national origins. The writers of the Conservative Revolution saw this happening in Italy and hoped it would happen in Germany as well.[14] For Gottfried Benn, the new Renaissance, like the Italian one, would be a rebirth of Classical Antiquity, with a greater emphasis on the Greeks than on the Romans, who inspired the older Renaissance. Benn used the entire ancient world, Greek and Roman, pagan and Christian, to express his feeling of standing at a turning point, where the past seems dead and the future is unclear, like T. S. Eliot in 'The Wasteland.' When Evola described the modern world as the Hindu *kali-yuga* or Dark Age, his language implied that this Dark Age will be followed by a new Golden Age, a view consistent with Jünger's expectation of a new epoch.

Conservative Revolutionaries faced the challenge of determining what to conserve. Moeller van den Bruck wrote in *Das Dritte Reich* (The Third Reich, a book that gave a slogan to the Nazi regime, which otherwise ignored him), 'As for what is going to change in a people's history, let it change. The unchangeable, what remains, is more powerful and more important than the changeable, which consists of the addition or subtraction of secondary elements.'[15] Albrecht Erich Günther wrote to

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[11] Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950).

[12] 'I am not a human being, I am dynamite.' Friedrich Nietzsche, Der Fall Wagner; Götzen-Dämmerung; Der Antichrist; Ecce Homo; Dionysos-Dithyramben; Nietzsche contra Wagner (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999), p. 363. English version: The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the idols, and Other Writings (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 143-144.

[13] Quoted by Mohler, Konservative Revolution, p. 90.

[14] Stefan Breuer, 'Italia docet,' Anatomie der Konservativen Revolution (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1993), pp. 124-135.

[15] Moeller van den Bruck, Das Dritte Reich (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1931), p. 187. Translated as Germany's Third Empire (London: Arktos, 2012).

Mohler in *Der Ring* (1931), a magazine of the Conservative Revolution, that, like Moeller van den Bruck, 'We understand conservative to mean not hanging onto what existed yesterday, but a life based on what is always true and valid.' Mohler explains, 'This means that the conservative does not live only in the future like the true believer in progress, nor only in the past, like the reactionary, but in a consummated present, where past and future are united. We hear Nietzsche's "Great Noon."'[16] An editorial proclaimed 'Revolution means revolution, turning back, the coming again of an earlier and better condition.'[17]

The writers of the Conservative Revolution shared with Evola a critical distance from Christianity. Mohler argues that Nietzsche and the Conservative Revolutionary writers he influenced saw Christianity as fundamentally 'progressive.' That Christianity by its history and nature has a linear view of time and history was argued in Oscar Cullmann's *Christ and Time*.[18] Mohler quotes similar ideas from the Catholic thinker Romano Guardini. Historically, there were Christians among the writers of the Conservative Revolution in the '20s and '30s, and later Christian writers shared its insights. Since, however, he attributes fundamental importance to the opposition of linear and circular views of time, Mohler insists that the worldview of the Conservative Revolution cannot be reconciled with the Christian one. Evola agreed with this perspective in both versions of *Pagan Imperialism*.

Evola's essays which critically assess Italian Fascism and German National Socialism retain their importance, but for different reasons. His analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of Italian Fascism remains of political importance in Italy, where the subject reoccurs again and again because of Fascism's foundational role in creating contemporary Italy. Evola's critical evaluation of National Socialism is of historical significance. After 1933, the voices and views of the Conservative Revolution were silenced or marginalised (or, in a few cases, turned into slogans that had been emptied of their original meaning, like Moeller van den Bruck's idea of a German Third Reich). Part of Evola's positive reception in Germany in the decade the followed Hitler's rise to power was due to his ability to express views, criticisms and a worldview that were not officially welcome and were even suppressed in the new Germany, because he was a foreigner.[19] Even more as an Italian, he represented a country that was showing the way to a creative future without democracy or

[16] Mohler, Konservative Revolution, p.116.
[17] Mohler, Konservative Revolution, p. 107.
[18] Oscar Cullmann, Christ and Time (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964).
[19] Evola, The Path of Cinnabar, pp. 154-155.

progressivism.[20] Evola's books and lectures gave a voice to the worldview of the Conservative Revolution.

Notes on the Third Reich provides another statement of this worldview from the pen of one of the last survivors of the Conservative Revolution. After the Second World War, Spengler was dead, Carl Schmitt an outcast and Ernst Jünger devoted himself to developing his literary gifts. Evola's book on Jünger's *Der Arbeiter*[21] attempted to salvage important positive points from the high noon of the Conservative Revolution just before Hitler came to power. *Notes on the Third Reich*, on the other hand, preserves and renews the Conservative Revolution's critique of the regime that exploited and frustrated it. It confirms Armin Mohler's point that the Conservative Revolution should not be identified with National Socialism and, in fact, offered a thoughtful and principled critique of that movement and the government it established. This insight is of historical importance for those who desire to understand the past, as well as to do justice to the great writers and thinkers of the past.

In addition, however, *Notes on the Third Reich* expresses a critique of the regimes that preceded and followed the Third Reich, regimes under which Europeans and Americans now live. It is not only radical traditionalists who feel dissatisfaction with these social and political forms. An important American writer, Marilynne Robinson, has written about 'the general sense that we are suffering a radical moral decline, which is destroying the fabric of society, seriously threatening our sense of safety as well as of mutual respect and shared interest. Such anxieties can be dangerous and irrational — perhaps they are in most cases. But the evidence is impressive that we are now looking at real decay.'[22] These words may evoke the concept of *kali-yuga*. Robinson argues that we must take seriously again the tradition associated with John Calvin and the Puritans, one as unsatisfactory to Evola as to contemporary progressivists. Still, since her arguments were heard with respect, perhaps we are ready to listen to other voices that speak of different possibilities, both from the past and in the future. The writers, thinkers and activists of the Conservative Revolution between the two World Wars still give eloquent expression to these alternative possibilities, if we are willing to listen. Julius Evola speaks with them and for them.

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[20] See Stefan Breuer (1993), note 14 above.

[21] Julius Evola, L' 'operaio' nel pensiero di Ernst Jünger (Rome: G Volpe, 1974).

[22] Marilynne Robinson, The Death of Adam: Essays on Modern Thought (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), p. 157.

Introduction

In these notes, German National Socialism will be made the object of a rather succinct examination. First of all, concerning a judgment from the point of view of the Right, on different aspects of this movement we will have to repeat what we have already said when considering Fascism in the previous essay.[1] There, among other things, we have had the chance to make some references to the orientations of the Third Reich and of some initiatives undertaken in it. Thus we shall dwell only on some differentiating elements.

Then it is necessary to remember that, in the case of the Third Reich, singling out concrete forces that are intrinsically valid and susceptible to being separated from what was contingent is more difficult than in the case of Fascism, and for various reasons. First, the negative elements that today are generally emphasised when people speak of 'Nazism' — concentration camps, persecution of the Jews, responsibility for starting the Second World War, Hitler's ideas — should be separated from the rest. Second, the central and overwhelming role that was held by a given individual in Germany, even more than in Italy — that is, Adolf Hitler — so much so that we can talk of a *Führerstaat*, or a *Führer* state, has cast everything else into the shadows for many. Third, in the case of the Third Reich abroad, but also in contemporary Germany, the entire period from the end of the Weimar Republic[2] to the Second World War has been hastily called 'Nazism,' as if we were dealing with something completely unitary and homogeneous. There is no appropriate consideration of the particular factors that played a role in the birth and construction of the Third Reich, with the notable tensions and divergences that subsisted behind the totalitarian structure.

This is the examination to which we ought to proceed, lingering over aspects that few know about in Italy, but that have a particular importance for our purposes. For this and for a general orientation, we will have to review the antecedents, and the complex ideological and political situation in Germany before Hitler came to power.

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[1] Julius Evola, Fascism Viewed from the Right (London: Arktos, 2013).

[2] The Weimar Republic was the liberal democratic state which existed in Germany from shortly after Germany's defeat in the First World War until the passage of the Enabling Act in 1933, after Hitler's assumption of the Chancellorship. The Enabling Act suspended the Weimar Constitution, and effectively transferred all power to Hitler, ending the Weimar Republic.

I

There is no need to dwell on the social, democratic, and liberal political forces of the parliamentary Weimar Republic. Their inadequacy, weakness and inconsistency became as increasingly obvious as their inability to master the social chaos that was the inevitable consequence of Germany's defeat, the collapse of the previous regime, the disastrous clauses of the Versailles Treaty, and the growing unemployment. This situation led to a situation where Marxism and, in part, Communism too, gained a more significant foothold in the post-war period than in all preceding German history. Moreover, the situation was a 'phenomenon of circumstances,' even if it could have led to decisive and alarming developments had not something intervened to change the course of events on the factual social level.

Hitler's party chose the name Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP), that is, literally, the National Socialist German Workers' Party. Hitler's propaganda appealed to the workers. He tried to attract the German working masses and draw them away from international Marxism, by offering them a 'national' and 'German' solution to their problems. Many writers have expressed the opinion that the combination or synthesis (already foreseen by Sorel)[1] of 'national' and 'social' (or 'socialistic') is in general the defining characteristic of the various 'fascisms' of the previous generation. This could have been the formula to which they owed their success and, in particular, the one thanks to which Hitler could dispose of a large, mass party as a force that prepared his rise to power. It is, however, superfluous to say that to reduce these movements to this point alone ignores the elements that, from our point of view, are the most interesting ones. We need to provide details about Germany.

In fact, it is necessary to understand what 'national' meant to Hitler, and for that we need to look at the antecedents. It can be said that in Germany, mass democratic nationalism of the modern type had made only a fleeting appearance. It was Napoleon, the 'revolutionary imperialist,' who provoked this phenomenon, almost by contagion or backlash, because it was in the wars of liberation against the French

[1] Georges Sorel (1847-1922) was a French philosopher who began as a Marxist and later developed Revolutionary Syndicalism. He advocated the use of myth and organised violence in revolutionary movements. He was influential upon both the Communist and Fascist movements. His primary works are Reflections on Violence and The Illusions of Progress.

invaders that properly nationalistic sentiments arose among the Germans, beyond their traditional dynastic and loyalist structures that had the state and not the 'people' or the 'nation' as the centre of gravity. But 'nationalism' in this sense, with a democratic basis, did not go beyond the passing phenomenon of the Frankfurt Parliament of 1848 in connection with the revolutionary movements that raged all over Europe in that period.[2] (It is significant that the King of Prussia, Frederick William IV,[3] turned down the offer, made by that Parliament, of making him the leader of all Germany because, by accepting it, he would also have accepted the democratic principle — power conferred by a popular representative assembly — and renounced his legitimate right to rule, admittedly restricted to Prussia alone.) Bismarck,[4] when he created the Second Reich,[5] did not give it a 'national' basis, and saw in the corresponding ideology the beginning of dangerous disorders in the European order as well, while the conservatives of the *Kreuzzeitung*[6] accused nationalism of being a 'naturalistic' and regressive phenomenon, which was foreign to the highest tradition and conception of the state.

There is, on the other hand, a different current that we must take into consideration, although it was previously restricted to rather insignificant groups. We need to indicate the meaning of 'national' as expressed by the German word *völkisch*, which was used in these circles. Here we can speak of 'ethnic nationalism,' insofar as the *Volk* (from which come the words *völkisch* and *Volkstum*)[7] was understood as a kind of entity defined by a common stock whose identity would be maintained

[2] A series of revolutions based on liberal and socialist principles broke out in various European countries in 1848. In Germany (then the German Confederation), the social unrest led the various German states to convene an assembly to draft a new constitution, in which the delegates from each state were elected (the type of elections varied from state to state, using both direct and indirect means). This was the first elected parliament in German history. Frederick William IV of Prussia was elected to the position of Emperor of the new state. When he refused it, the Parliament soon collapsed, having lasted only one year.

[3] Frederick William IV (1795-1861) was the King of Prussia from 1840 until his death. He was strongly conservative.

[4] Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) was the Prussian leader who unified the German states into one nation during the 1860s, leading to his becoming the first Chancellor of the German Empire in 1871.

[5] The Second Reich, or the German Empire as it was known in its time, was established in 1871 with the unification of all the German states under the rule of Kaiser William I. It dissolved as a result of its defeat in the First World War in 1918.

[6] The Kreuzzeitung, or 'Cross Newspaper' (so called because its symbol was the Iron Cross) began publishing during the 1848 Revolution, and acted as a mouthpiece for Prussian conservatives.

[7] The German word Volkstum refers in a broad sense to the culture, character and traditions of a people.

through the ages. We could also refer to the romantic conception of the nation, the concept of *Volk* formulated by Fichte[8] in his *Addresses to the German Nation*[9] in connection with the struggle for liberation. Arndt,[10] Jahn[11] and Lange[12] developed the same theme after Fichte; the Deutschbund[13] was founded (as early as 1894) and then a *Völkische Bewegung*,[14] as the idea of the race-nation was not limited only to 'internal use,' but acquired at times pan-German implications. There were also anti-Semitic positions in the name of the *Volk*. In a certain fashion we have here the origins of German 'racism.'

At any rate, 'national' in Germany did not have the same meaning it had in western Europe. It is in the *völkisch* idea that we can see the precursor that played an important role in Hitlerism. Hitler was always talking about the *Volk*. The *Volksgemeinschaft*, or community understood in terms of the *Volk*, a race-people, will be the slogan of his Third Reich, where, anyhow, as we shall see, it will play a rather problematic role.

Thus the connection established by Hitler between 'national' and 'social' had a special character. While, on the one hand, he stigmatised Marxism as an antinational movement that was fatal for German *Volkstum*, on the other, he appealed to a type of German national and racial pride and proclaimed a 'national socialism' that, as the

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[8] Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) was the foremost philosopher of German Idealism after Kant, and before Hegel. He was one of the intellectual founders of modern German nationalism during the Napoleonic Wars.

[9] Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Addresses to the German Nation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[10] Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769-1860) was a German poet and author who was one of the founders of German nationalist ideology during the Napoleonic Wars.

[11] Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778-1862) was a German educator who founded the gymnastics movement in 1811, which was initially intended to physically prepare the German people to fight for their independence from Napoleon. Jahn served as both a soldier and an officer in the Prussian Army, and won the Iron Cross. In 1848, he was elected to the Frankfurt Parliament.

[12] Friedrich Lange (1852-1817) was a German journalist who was the founder of the Deutschbund.

[13] The Deutschbund was a nationalist group in Germany dedicated to völkisch ideology, and promoted aggressive German expansionism. It refrained from direct political action, however. Highly elitist, its membership was by invitation only. It was one of the few groups not affiliated with the National Socialist Party that was allowed to exist in Germany during the Third Reich, and survived until it was banned by the Allies in 1945.

[14] The Völkische Bewegung, or völkisch movement, was not an organisation in the usual sense, but rather a subculture in the Germany of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that took inspiration from the ideals of German Romanticism, had a strong belief in nature-worship and German traditions, and was both anti-urban and anti-modern.

original name of the party indicates, was first of all essentially thinking of the masses and the working class. This was therefore the first component of Nazism. In general, in the condition of 'rootlessness,' the alienation of the individual and the masses, a type of mystic aura surrounded it.

After this we must consider other elements and precursors, which are rather diverse in spirit and in origin. After the First World War the situation in Germany was distinctly different from the one in Italy. As we have said, Mussolini had to create his state almost from nothing, in the sense that when it came to fighting red subversion and putting the state back on its feet, he could not appeal to a tradition in the highest sense of the term. In short, what was being threatened was only a prolonging of the democratic and liberal little Italy of the nineteenth century, with a heritage of the *Risorgimento*[15] that echoed the ideologies of the French Revolution and a monarchy that reigned but did not govern, and did not possess solid social articulations. The situation was different in Germany. Even after the military collapse and the revolution of 1918,[16] and despite the social chaos, remnants survived with deep roots in that hierarchical world, which was at times still feudal, focused on the values of the state and its authority that were part of the earlier tradition, in particular of Prussianism. This was the tradition because of which the Central Powers[17] had appeared in the eyes of the western democracies as an 'intolerable obscurantist residue.' In fact, in central Europe the ideas of the French Revolution had never taken root as they had in the other European countries.

In addition, even after 1918 and before the advent of Hitler there were those, especially intellectuals, who, beginning from that traditional legacy, sought to promote a movement that wanted to restore and, at the same time, renew. It should be considered a revolution, however, not in the progressive and subversive sense, but rather as the elimination of the negative, of what was sclerotic and that in the previous

[15] The Risorgimento ('resurgence') is the name for the liberation from Austro-Hungarian rule, conquest and unification of the various states on the Italian peninsula by the House of Savoy, the rulers of Piedmont in northern Italy. It included Garibaldi's overthrow of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (1864) and culminated in Savoy's unprovoked invasion of the Papal States in 1870. This led to the creation of the modern Italian state.

[16] Following the collapse of the German Empire at the end of the First World War, all of Germany erupted into anarchy, with Communists, socialists and nationalists vying for power through street fighting. The revolution technically ended with the establishment of the Weimar Republic in 1919, but political violence and unrest continued for many years.

[17] The Central Powers in the First World War consisted of the German Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire (and, later, Bulgaria).

regime had lost its original vital potential, responding instead to the advent of the new industrial era. This is the source of the frequently used formula of 'Conservative Revolution.'[18] It was not simply a return to yesterday. It wanted to conserve not certain historical forms, but that which had an enduring value. Moeller van den Bruck,[19] who died in 1925 and was one of the principal exponents of this current, wrote, 'To be conservative does not mean to remain attached to what has been but to live and act starting from what has a lasting value.' The spiritual orientation was prevalent in these circles. The emphasis was placed on a revolution that was above all spiritual.

The term 'Third Reich,' which was destined to be taken up by Hitler, was coined by Moeller van den Bruck himself and was the title of one of his books, published in 1923. (Another book, which was published posthumously, was entitled *Das Ewige Reich*,[20] that is, the eternal Reich. It is possible that some of Hitler's 'millenarian' obsessions were connected to this book.) In these groups they talked of working to evoke a 'secret Germany' (*Geheimes Deutschland*) that maintained itself through historical contingencies. The First Reich was the Holy Roman Empire;[21] the second was the German Empire founded by Bismarck in 1871, which survived under Wilhelm II[22] to the end of the First World War. The Third Reich was supposed to rise to surpass everything that was inauthentic in the era of Kaiser Wilhelm (Wilhelmism).

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[18] The Conservative Revolution is a term first coined by Hugo von Hoffmansthal, which has come to designate a loose confederation of anti-liberal German thinkers who wrote during the Weimar Republic. There was a great diversity of views within the ranks of the Conservative Revolutionaries, but in general they opposed both democratic capitalism and Communism in favour of a synthesis of the German (and especially Prussian) aristocratic traditions with socialism. The Conservative Revolutionaries opposed liberalism in all its forms, rejected a return to the Kaiser's Reich, and saw Germany as being culturally tilted more towards Russia than towards France or Britain.

[19] Arthur Moeller van den Bruck (1876-1925) was one of the principal authors of the German Conservative Revolution. He is best known for his 1923 book, Das Dritte Reich, translated as Germany's Third Empire (London: Arktos, 2012). A follower of Nietzsche, he advocated the idea of a third German empire to replace the Weimar Republic which would embody a synthesis between socialism and nationalism and provide for the needs of all citizens, but within a hierarchical framework based on traditional values. Despite Hitler's appropriation of his book's title, he rejected National Socialism for its anti-intellectual nature in a note he left just prior to his suicide.

[20] Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Das Ewige Reich (Breslau: W. G. Korn, 1933-35), 3 vols.

[21] The Holy Roman Empire consisted of various Central European territories throughout its existence, lasting from 962 to 1806.

[22] Wilhelm II (1859-1941) was the Kaiser of the German Empire from 1888 until he abdicated the throne following the collapse of Germany in November 1918.

Since the Weimar Republic was considered a simple interregnum, the field was free for a new political creation. These notions were in many ways typical of the circles of intellectuals, but they also had a certain influence as precursors of the Third Reich.

Another current instead presented aspects that were mostly existential. Its origin must be brought back to what was called the 'generation of the frontline.' Germany in the period right after the First World War saw the appearance of E. M. Remarque,[23] the author of the sadly famous defeatist book *All Quiet on the Western Front*.[24] There was also, however, an anti-Remarque position which professed the faith of combatants who saw the war as an *experience*, and had not lived through something that 'had broken them even when the cannons spared them' (as Remarque put it). Instead, for them war was rather a test that, in the best of them, had provoked a process of purification and liberation. This was the idea of a Thomas Mann,[25] a Franz Schauwecker,[26] an H. Fischer,[27] but especially Ernst Jünger,[28] a volunteer combatant decorated and wounded many times over before he became a writer. For Jünger, the Great War had been destructive and nihilistic, only, however, in relation to everything that is mere rhetoric, the 'idealism' of the big hypocritical words, the

[23] Erich Maria Remarque (1898-1970) was a German writer who served in the First World War. His most well-known work is his 1927 novel, All Quiet on the Western Front, which depicted the war as a horrific and futile struggle.

[24] Erich Maria Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1929).

[25] Thomas Mann, who was something of a conservative, summarised his thoughts on the post-war situation in Reflections of a Non-Political Man (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1983).

[26] Franz Schauwecker (1890-1964) was a war veteran who wrote several famous books about his war experiences, becoming a nationalist writer in the Weimar era.

[27] Ernst Hugo Fischer (1897-1975) was a German philosopher and sociologist who was part of the nationalist movement in the Weimar era.

[28] Ernst Jünger (1895-1998) was one of the most prominent of the German Conservative Revolutionaries, but that was only one phase in a long and varied career. He volunteered for and fought in the German Army throughout the First World War, and was awarded the highest decoration, the Pour le Mérite, for his service. After the war, he wrote many books and novels, was active in German politics, experimented with psychedelic drugs, and travelled the world. During the Weimar period, he wrote a number of highly influential books based on his war experiences, works of philosophy, and essays supporting the revolutionary nationalist position. He remained ambivalent about National Socialism at first, but never joined the Party, and he had turned against the Nazis by the late 1930s. He rejoined the Wehrmacht at the outbreak of the Second World War, however, and remained in Paris as a Captain, where he spent more time with Picasso and Cocteau than enforcing the occupation. His objections to the Nazis were influential upon the members of the Stauffenberg plot to assassinate Hitler in July 1944, which led to his dismissal from the Wehrmacht. After the war, Jünger's political views gradually moved toward a sort of aristocratic anarchism.

bourgeois conception of existence. For a certain generation it was rather the principle of a 'heroic realism,' the crucible in which, 'among the storms of steel,' a new human type had taken form, which Jünger described and to which he believed the future was destined to belong. In fact, the development of analogous ideas in a context that was no longer limited to war, but embraced all existence, was given by Jünger in his book, *Der Arbeiter*,[29] which created quite a sensation in Germany in the period just before Hitler's rise to power. Although not speaking in the more conservative terms of the other tendencies of which we have just spoken, but insisting rather on the necessity of first reaching the zero point of the values of the bourgeois world with a 'positive nihilism,' his ultimate prospective was equally, in a fundamental sense, that of a new, rigorously organised Reich. Its backbone and formative force was the new human type.

Apart from these theoretical formulations, 'the unbroken generation of the frontline' had already given life to the so-called Freikorps, groups of volunteers who, in the immediate aftermath of 1918, fought against Bolshevism in the eastern and Baltic regions, which had transient boundaries (Captain Hermann Ehrhardt's brigade was famous),[30] and also internally, contributing to the suppression of revolutionary efforts by Communists and 'Spartacists.'

An even greater importance on the political level belonged to the forces of the veterans of the national Right that formed the Stahlhelm[31] (the 'Steel Helmet') of

[29] Der Arbeiter: Herrschaft und Gestalt (Hamburg: Henseat. Verl.-Anst., 1932). Many view this work as the most important one to emerge from the Conservative Revolution. It has not been translated into English. However, many of the ideas it contains are summarised in Jünger's own essay, 'Total Mobilization,' which is available in Richard Wolin (ed.), The Heidegger Controversy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

[30] Hermann Ehrhardt (1881-1971) was a Captain of the German Imperial Navy who fought in the First World War. Holding pro-monarchist views, he rejected the Versailles Treaty and the Weimar government and formed the paramilitary Second Marine Brigade in the immediate aftermath of the war. This Freikorps unit went on to combat Communists within Germany, as well as Polish separatists in Upper Silesia, which had been part of Prussia since Frederick the Great's time. The issue of Germany's borders continued to be debated for several years after the end of the war, and ultimately, the League of Nations transferred Upper Silesia to Poland. Ehrhardt refused to support Hitler, even when many Freikorps soldiers began to join the Nazis.

[31] The Stahlhelm, Bund der Frontsoldaten (Steel Helmet, League of Frontline Soldiers) was a Freikorps organisation established in December 1918, and was financed by the Herrenklub, which Evola was associated with. The Stahlhelm also received an endorsement from Mussolini. By the late 1920s, they were the largest Freikorps group in Germany. In later years, they acted as the security force of the DNVP.

Seldte[32] and Düsterberg[33] and the political party of the 'German Nationalists' (DNVP)[34] of Hugenberg.[35] They were naturally joined by the primary traditional and conservative force in existence, the Reichswehr[36] or army. The army was officially loyal to the legal government of the Weimar Republic, but internally it did not accept the new regime and maintained the ideas, ideals and *ethos* of the previous tradition, which had shaped the officer corps. In the spirit of Prussianism, the Reichswehr did not consider itself as a simple military force at the disposition of a bourgeois parliamentary regime, but rather as the representative of a given vision of life and also of a political idea. With its attitude, imbued by a rigorous sense of honour and discipline, the Reichswehr was to maintain these characteristics even during the successive vicissitudes of the Third Reich, for the most part.

Being pro-monarchy, the DNVP remained distinct from the National Socialists until after 1933, when extreme pressure by the Nazis resulted in the absorption of the Stahlhelm into the SA.

[32] Franz Seldte (1882-1947) was one of the founders of the Stahlhelm. He lost his left arm while fighting in the First World War. When Hitler became Chancellor in 1933, Seldte took the post of Minister of Labour in his cabinet, a post he was to hold until the end of the Third Reich, and he supervised the absorption of the Stahlhelm into the SA. He died in an American military hospital.

[33] Theodor Düsterberg (1875-1950) was an ex-army officer who joined the Stahlhelm in 1923, becoming one of its leaders by the following year. In the 1932 election he ran for president, but the Nazis sabotaged his chances by revealing that he had Jewish ancestry. He was offered a position in Hitler's cabinet in 1933, but refused it, objecting to the Nazis' excessive anti-Semitism and socialist tendencies. He likewise resigned from the Stahlhelm after it was absorbed by the Nazis. After being briefly imprisoned in Dachau concentration camp, he stayed out of politics for the remainder of his life.

[34] The Deutschnationale Volkspartei, or German National People's Party, was established in 1918 as an anti-socialist and pro-monarchist party, and was initially the largest Right-wing party in Weimar Germany until the late 1920s, when they were displaced by the National Socialists. In January 1933, it joined the coalition that brought Hitler to power, but dissolved itself by June as the Nazis became the only party.

[35] Alfred Hugenberg (1865-1951) was a German nationalist and businessman who joined the DNVP in 1919 and was elected to the Reichstag, also becoming a newspaper magnate. Following the DNVP's decline, Hugenberg began to support the Nazis as well, and forged an alliance between them and the DNVP, hoping to use the more popular Nazis as a means for securing his own goals. Upon Hitler's assumption of power, Hugenberg was briefly appointed Minister of Economy and Minister of Agriculture, but by June, with the ousting of the DNVP from politics, he was forced to resign. He remained a 'guest' member of the Reichstag until 1945.

[36] The Reichswehr (Reich Defence) was the army established from the remnants of the army of the German Empire in 1919, its size being strictly limited by the terms of the Versailles Treaty. Its officers detested the Weimar Republic, however, and operated mostly independently of the civilian government. In 1935, the Reichswehr was renamed and reorganised as the Wehrmacht (Defence Force), following Hitler's abandonment of the terms of the Versailles Treaty.

The President of the Republic, Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg,[37] was a representative of the Reichswehr. There were therefore natural and traditional connections between the army and the nobility (which had one of its principal centres in the Herrenklub[38] of Berlin), and in particular with the *Junker*,[39] while a similar Rightist perspective was shared by many career diplomats, upper bureaucrats and managers of big business.

[37] Paul von Hindenburg (1847-1934) was a Prussian Field Marshal who became a German national hero following his defeat of the Russians at the Battle of Tannenberg in August 1914, in one of the first battles of the First World War, and he was appointed Chief of the General Staff in 1916. During the war, his popularity eclipsed that of the Kaiser himself. In 1919, Hindenburg was called before the Reichstag to answer questions regarding his role in Germany's defeat. Refusing to answer questions, Hindenburg instead read a statement stating that the army had been preparing a victory offensive in the summer of 1918 that was only halted by a 'stab in the back' from politicians at home, which became a rallying cry for the Right during the Weimar years. Although he had no political ambitions of his own, he reluctantly agreed to run for President as an independent in the 1925 elections at the urging of the conservatives, and won. He won re-election in 1932, but refused Hitler's demand that he be appointed Chancellor, disliking both Hitler and the Nazis. Under intense pressure from his colleagues, however, he did appoint Hitler as Chancellor on 30 January 1933, and supported the Nazis in their efforts to become the only legal party in Germany. Suffering from cancer, Hindenburg did little to oppose the Nazis thereafter, although privately he objected to many of their activities. After his death in 1934, Hitler assumed the offices of both President and Chancellor.

[38] The Herrenklub (Gentlemen's Club) was a powerful organisation of pro-monarchy German aristocrats with which Evola himself was affiliated, initially founded by Moeller van den Bruck. After 1933, its members had hoped to influence National Socialist policy, but they were ignored by the Party.

[39] Junker, or 'young gentleman' was a term coined in the nineteenth century to refer to the Prussian nobility. They ceased to exist following the absorption of Prussia into Poland after the Second World War under Soviet auspices.

II

This was the general context presented by anti-Marxist and non-democratic Germany before the National Socialist Party established itself on the national scene. If there had been an agreement among these various currents and, especially, if there had been men with the stature of leaders capable of confronting the situation, a 'conservative revolution' would have been possible after the burial of the Weimar Republic and the liquidation of social democracy.

But things went in another direction. Hitler's direct action on the masses was increasingly successful, and after the elections of 1930 he found himself at the head of a party and a parliamentary block (107 seats in the Reichstag)[1] that had to be taken seriously.

It was then that a situation arose that, to a certain degree, should have been fatal. Hitler's gradual conquest of power took place in the context of perfect legality, with absolutely no need of any equivalent of the Fascist March on Rome.[2] The forces of the Right we have discussed, which still maintained solid positions, held that the best solution would be a coalition. Their intention, however, was, to a certain degree, to use National Socialism, which, in its turn, recognised the impossibility of continuing its ascent without an understanding with the German nationalists and the Centre.[3] Meanwhile, Hindenburg himself, on the advice of von Papen,[4] who was also an exponent of the Right, conferred the chancellorship on Hitler, with van Papen serving as vice-chancellor. The presence in the first cabinet of Reich ministers like

[1] The Reichstag was the name of the German parliament from 1860 until 1945. Since 1949, it has been termed the Bundestag.

[2] The March on Rome refers to the uprising of the Fascists throughout Italy in October 1922, which led to Mussolini's appointment as Prime Minister.

[3] The Centre Party was a Catholic political party.

[4] Franz von Papen (1879-1969) had served as an officer in the war, then joined the Centre Party. He was also a member of the Herrenklub. In 1932, he was appointed by Hindenburg to be Chancellor of Germany, although he was forced to resign after only a few months. In January 1933 he urged Hindenburg to appoint Hitler, believing that he could be controlled and the Nazis used as a tool by the conservatives.

Seldte, Düsterberg, von Neurath,[5] von Schwerin-Krosigk,[6] von Blomberg and other prominent Rightists was believed to be enough to keep Hitler in his place. Moreover, the principal developments that were to precipitate the crisis and lead to a totalitarian Nazi Reich took place while Hindenburg was still the head of state, with his support and his sanction. Since Rightists, too, believed that the primary tasks were the national concentration of forces and the elimination of both subversion and the incoherent parliamentary democracy, they left it up to Hitler to accomplish this.

The first step was accomplished in February 1933. In response to the burning of the Reichstag (an event about which complete clarity has never been achieved, but which was at that time attributed to a Communist)[7] a 'Decree for the Protection of the People and the State'[8] was proclaimed, which was directed essentially against the Communists. It also contemplated the suspension of some articles of the constitution. The decree, which was signed by Hindenburg, had the status of law. The Communists were not the only ones to be effected by the decree because it was enforced not only by the police but also by Hitler's SA[9] and SS on their own initiative, and this led to the perpetration of excesses. If, however, we are to formulate a judgment from the general point of view of the Right, we should say that in every state worthy of the name, measures like this one are necessary under certain circumstances. It is because nothing similar took place in Italy, to the greater glory of the holy democracy, that the cancer represented by Communism and its fellow travellers has spread to an alarming degree in post-war Italy and has sunk roots so deep that its extirpation seems unlikely without a civil war. We should note, on the other hand, that the post-war German Federal Republic (with its capital in Bonn) has shown greater foresight

[5] Konstantin von Neurath (1873-1956) served as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1932 until 1938. During the war he served as the Reichsprotektor of Bohemia and Moravia.

[6] Johann Ludwig Graf Schwerin von Krosigk (1887-1977) was Minister of Finance from 1932 until 1935.

[7] On 27 February 1933, the Reichstag building was destroyed in an arson attack. The Communists and the Nazis traded accusations over responsibility, although to this day it remains unclear who did it. The Communist Marinus van der Lubbe was tried and executed for the crime.

[8] Also known as the Reichstag Fire Decree, it suspended civil liberties in Germany and transferred political power from the states to the central government.

[9] The SA (Sturmabteilung, or 'Stormtroopers'), otherwise known as the Brownshirts, were the paramilitary wing of the Nazi Party.

and determination. From the point of view of democracy itself, but with a better understanding of democracy, it used its authority to suppress the Communist Party.[10]

The Reichstag was dissolved, new elections were called and already at the parliament's second session it was asked to approve the so-called *Ermächtigunggesetz*,[11] a law that invested Hitler and his government with full powers at the expense of 'popular representation' in the demo-liberal sense. The law passed with 441 votes in favour against 94 opposed. We need to remember that in the Reichstag, beside the National Socialists there were still representatives of the Right and the Centre. The Communist deputies were absent and some socialists, but even if they had been present, the law would still have passed with the required two-thirds majority.

Following this vote, Hitler was free to begin implementing his programme. Hindenburg, who was still head of state, played a role in the dissolution of the various parties in the name of the so-called *Gleichschaltung*, a general framework that was supposed to signify the unification of the different political forces into a single national front for the reconstruction of Germany. Even the *Stahlhelm* and the Rightist organisation of the German nationalists agreed to disband in obedience to the new watchword of unification. Finally, on 14 July 1933, a decree formally put an end to the regime of the parties by prohibiting membership in any party except the National Socialist Party. There followed the 'one party' system, conceived as the supporting and organising political force of the Reich.

We have already expressed our judgment on this system in our remarks on Fascism. In Germany's case we need to point out, however, that the end of the parliament made up of parties did not lead to an alternative, as in Italy, with the founding of a Chamber of Corporations[12] or an analogous body. Only single persons and single offices were, eventually, exponents of different directions, and the final decision was always left to Hitler, without the existence of a true consultative body on the institutional level. The idea that, in the future, the Reichstag would have

[10] The West German government banned the Communist Party of Germany in 1956, although it was reconstituted in 1968 under a different name.

[11] Known in English as the Enabling Act, this allowed the Chancellor to enact laws without having to consult the Reichstag, and became the cornerstone of Hitler's power.

[12] In Italy, the Chamber of Fasces and Corporations was set up in January 1939 to replace the Chamber of Deputies. Unlike in the Chamber of Deputies, where representatives were chosen by popular vote, representatives in the new Chamber were nominated by the Fascist Grand Council, the National Council of Corporations, and the National Council of the Fascist Party.

become at least the expression of different interparty currents, remained a pious hope. If, in the Nazi Third Reich that followed the parliamentary regime, there were tensions that sometimes made its synergy and unity appear miraculous, they remained limited to the upper levels of the party. These tensions existed, for instance, between Göring and Goebbels, between Ribbentrop and Himmler, between Ley[13] and some exponents of big business, aside from the tension between the Reichswehr and the SA, which was soon settled in a drastic way that we shall discuss later.

The law conferring full powers upon Hitler remained in force until the very end in 1945, and not only for the four-year period requested by Hitler for the 'reconstruction of Germany.' Even without adhering to the fetish of the so-called 'rule of law'[14] of liberal inspiration, we ought to see this situation as excessive. It is not right to perpetuate and virtually institutionalise what can be legitimate only in particular temporary situations. The ethical bonds, which are necessarily indeterminate and elastic, between the responsibility held by one part (from on high), and trust and fidelity by the other, cannot replace definite statements of law that, even in an authoritarian state of the Right, must be established to prevent 'dictatorial' leaders. The coexistence of a superior authority, at least like the one Hindenburg incarnated, appears to be an indispensable condition.

An initiative Hitler undertook already in the period when Hindenburg was still head of state, and which had an anti-traditional character, was extending the *Gleichschaltung* also to the *Länder*, the individual regional entities that in their partial autonomy and sovereignty corresponded to the various kingdoms, principalities and free cities of the federation of which the Second Reich was composed, with Prussia enjoying a preeminent position among them. These were abolished one after another, and the individual *Länder*[15] were integrated in the central government by taking on the character of *Gaue*,[16] areas headed by functionaries of the Reich's central government, who were no longer representatives

[13] Robert Ley (1890-1945) was the Head of the German Labour Front from 1933 until 1945.

[14] The idea of the 'rule of law' which in its modern form derives mainly from the English political tradition, holds that no one is above the law, including the political leadership, in contrast to traditional monarchy, in which the monarch rules by divine right.

[15] The Länder are the various states that comprise Germany. Prior to 1933, and today, they enjoy a degree of autonomy from the central government.

[16] Gaue was the term used for the regions of the German-speaking areas of the Carolingian Empire during Medieval times. Under the Nazis, the Länder were reorganised into Gaue. While the Gauleiters who ruled each Gau had considerable autonomy, through them they were all ultimately subject to the authority of the NSDAP.

of the corresponding communities. Prussia was the first to undergo this fate under the leadership, unfortunately, of von Papen, a Rightist. Even Hindenburg said nothing to oppose this development, which amounted to a policy of centralising and levelling. Once again the excuse given was the need of a total organisation of all forces with the goal being the maximisation of efficiency. Emphasis was placed on the fact that by this policy Germany had become, for the first time in its history, unified as a 'nation' (in the sense of modern nationalism). From our point of view, however, the negative aspect of the initiative is clear, since the previous system of a superior central authority combined with a group of smaller political units that enjoyed partial autonomy had an organic and qualitative character, which is traditional in a superior sense. In this regard Germany had presented, among all the modern European nations, an outstanding example.

[NOTE: In relation to this German 'national' unification effected by Hitler, we can point out the opposition between the type of Italy's unification, which had an analogous character, and the one effected by Bismarck with the creation of the Second Reich. This last unification had an organic character from above and was based on the agreement of the sovereigns of individual countries that maintained their traditional structure, and not through the 'people.' On the contrary, Italy became one, in the so-called *Risorgimento*, under the standard of ideologies that went back to the French Revolution and according to the 'nationalism' that derived from it.]

An episode that should be recalled here and that indicates the double face of Hitlerism in this first period is constituted by the events of 30 June 1934. On that day, and during what was called 'the Night of the Long Knives,'[17] a certain number of personalities were eliminated in short order, especially by the SS. Elements of various political orientations figured among them: in addition to the ex-Chancellor, General

[17] The Night of the Long Knives refers to the period between 30 June and 2 July 1934, when the Nazis arrested and executed many of their political opponents, allegedly to prevent a coup by the SA. The victims were not all part of the SA, however, and the Nazis used the opportunity to eliminate many of their rivals in the conservative establishment as well.

von Schleicher,[18] there were also men of the Right like von Bose,[19] von der Decken,[20] von Alvensleben,[21] and von Papen's secretary, Edgar Jung.[22] The chief reason given for the operation, however, was as follows: among the SA, the Brownshirts, whose head was Ernst Roehm,[23] the idea had spread of a 'second revolution,' or a second revolutionary period. They denounced the survival in the Reich of 'reactionary' groups, meaning those of the Right, and Hitler's chumminess with the 'barons of the army and business.' They had their sights principally on the Reichswehr with its old hierarchies and its connections with the aristocracy and the *Junker*. They wanted to replace the Reichswehr, the remnant of the old regime, with a new 'popular army,' a revolutionary *Volksheer*[24] with a purely National Socialist spirit. (As a concept this idea was close to the one proposed today in Maoist

[18] Kurt von Schleicher (1882-1934) was a Reichswehr general who sought to make the military the most powerful player in German politics again, and heavily involved in the machinations that eventually brought Hitler to power, believing that Hitler could be used as a pawn by the more mainstream conservatives. He served as Minister of Defence in von Papen's government. When von Papen resigned as Chancellor in December 1932, von Schleicher succeeded him, but his brief administration was beset by too many problems and he was dismissed after less than two months, bringing Hitler to power. He was killed during the Night of the Long Knives.

[19] Herbert von Bose (1893-1934) was the Chief of the Press Division in von Papen's office, while he was serving as Vice Chancellor to Hitler. He was in charge of a bulwark of conservatives who sought to control and then overthrow Hitler. He was killed during the Night of the Long Knives.

[20] George von der Decken (1898-1945) was a Reichswehr officer who was appointed to the Ministry of Defence in the Hitler-von Papen cabinet.

[21] Werner von Alvensleben (1875-1947) was a German politican and businessman who was close with von Schleicher. Disliking Hitler and the Nazis, he was part of the conservative opposition to them. He was arrested and imprisoned for several months on the Night of the Long Knives, and Hitler accused him in a speech of being the go-between for Roehm and von Schleicher during their coup preparations.

[22] Edgar Julius Jung (1894-1934) was a lawyer who was also one of the principal writers of the Conservative Revolutionary movement, authoring one of its most important works, The Rule of the Inferiour (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), two vols. He became von Papen's speechwriter in the Hitler-von Papen government, and was killed during the Night of the Long Knives.

[23] Ernst Roehm (1887-1934) had joined the German Workers' Party, the predecessor to the NSDAP, even before Hitler did, and was co-founder of the SA and later its leader, and was one of Hitler's closest advisors and confidants.

[24] 'National army.' Following the Nazis' rise to power, Roehm and his SA pressed for the creation of a new army that would combine the Reichswehr with the SA. This alarmed the Reichswehr, who feared the socialist ideals of the SA and the fact that it consisted of more than three million men, while the Reichswehr itself had been limited to 100,000 soldiers by the Versailles Treaty.

China.)[25] To the old 'reactionary' type of official they opposed a new National Socialist 'political soldier.' In a word, 30 June 1934 essentially represented the elimination of this radical current in the Party and of its purported conspiracy. Roehm himself, the head of the SA and Hitler's intimate friend, was killed, as was Gregor Strasser, the organiser of the Brownshirts in Berlin.[26] It is significant that Hindenburg, who was obviously looking only at the aspect of Hitler's drastic action that was in the interests of the class Hindenburg represented and which was followed by the disarming of the SA, did not hesitate to thank Hitler for his 'courageous intervention against the den of traitors' who had sought to undermine the unity of the Reich. Göring, too, received a similar message from Hindenburg.

With the death of Hindenburg on 2 August 1934 events began to speed up and produced institutional changes that led to the development of a pure totalitarian *Führer-Staat* (*Führer* state). Hitler claimed for himself and united in his person the positions of President of the Reich (which had been Hindenburg's position) and Chancellor, which he already held, while he remained supreme head of the National Socialist Party. But in this respect also, he did not disregard democratic legal sanction. A national plebiscite approved the innovation with 90% of the vote. (This cannot be explained by coercion alone — the percentages were not very different in regions or cities still under foreign control[27] and were due, perhaps, to a

[25] In 1966, when Mao Tse Tung proclaimed the Cultural Revolution, groups of students, who went by the name of the 'Red Guards,' and who were fanatically loyal to the ideals of the Revolution, were used to attack anyone who was perceived as being an enemy of the revolution, and very quickly subjected the country to a reign of terror, seizing control of cities and fighting with rival factions. At first they were encouraged by Mao, but the chaos grew so severe that by September 1967, he was forced to call in the army to restore order and eliminate the Red Guards.

[26] Gregor Strasser (1892-1934) was a war veteran who established his own Freikorps unit in 1919, with Heinrich Himmler as his adjutant. In 1921, he began supporting the fledgling Nazi Party, and was appointed the commander of the SA of the Lower Bavaria, later becoming the Party Gauleiter for the region, national chief of the Party's propaganda efforts (Goebbels was his subordinate), and finally, national leader of the NSDAP. Beginning in the mid-1920s, he worked to establish the Party in Berlin and northern Germany, resulting in higher membership numbers than in the south. Unlike Hitler's organisation in Bavaria, Strasser's wing of the Party was strongly socialist and anti-capitalist in ideology, leading to conflicts between Strasser and Hitler. By January 1933, Hitler had broken with Strasser, and moved to strip him and his followers of prominent NSDAP positions. Strasser was killed during the Night of the Long Knives.

[27] In 1920, the League of Nations, under the auspices of the Versailles Treaty, ordered the Saar region, which was the heart of German industry, to be occupied by French and British forces until 1935. Likewise, the Memel Territory and Danzig, whose sovereignty was contested between Lithuania and Poland, respectively, and Germany, were placed under the League's authority.

spectacular propaganda apparatus.) *Inter alia*, Hitler thus became also the commander-in-chief of the armed forces and additionally received the oath of 'unconditional obedience,' an oath that, given all the weight it had from tradition, must have played a significant role in future developments.

Judged straightforwardly, the Third Reich presented itself in terms of a popular dictatorship, since power was in the hands of a single individual lacking any superior chrism,[28] drawing the principle of its 'legitimacy' uniquely from the *Volk* and its consensus. This is the essence of the so-called *Führerprinzip*.[29] It was supposed to relate to a tradition from the times of the ancient Germani,[30] with the chief and his followers united by a bond of fidelity. In all this, several important issues were forgotten, however. First, at that time this bond was established only in an emergency or in view of definite military ends and, like the dictatorship in the early Roman period, the character of *Führer* (*dux* or *heretigo*) did not have a permanent character. Second, the 'followers' were the heads of the various tribes, not a mass, the *Volk*. Third, in the ancient German constitution, in addition to the exceptional instances in which, in certain circumstances as we have mentioned, the chief could demand an unconditional obedience — in addition to the *dux* or *heretigo* — there was the *rex*, possessed of a superior dignity based on his origin. All this we have already mentioned in our discussion of the 'dyarchy' that was established in Fascism by the coexistence of the monarchy, which we have seen as positive. As for Hitler, he nourished a fundamental aversion to the monarchy and, as we have noted, his polemic against the Habsburgs,[31] for instance, was of an unparalleled vulgarity. For Hitler, the *Volk* alone was the principle of legitimacy. He was established as its direct representative and guide, without intermediaries, and it was to follow him

[28] A type of anointing oil used in many branches of Christianity. By 'lacking any superior chrism,' Evola means that Hitler did not claim to rule by divine right.

[29] The Führerprinzip, or 'leadership principle,' was initially developed by the philosopher Count Hermann Graf von Keyserling, who was unaffiliated with the Nazis (and actually opposed to them). It is the idea that certain individuals are destined to become leaders in accordance with Social Darwinism, and that this quality puts them above the laws that govern the rest of society. The Nazis applied this principle to Hitler himself, whose will, being viewed as the manifestation of the will of the German people, was unrestricted by law or by any checks on his power. The Nazis also applied this to the various branches of the government and the Party, in which each leader exercised absolute power over his administrative area, being answerable only to Hitler.

[30] Germani was the Latin term for the tribes in Gaul, first coined by Julius Caesar in his war chronicles.

[31] Hitler was highly critical of the Habsburgs in Mein Kampf, going so far as to say that he had developed a hatred of them during his youth in Austria for having allowed the nation to become a multiethnic, rather than a German state.

unconditionally. No higher principle existed or was tolerated by him. Therefore it is perfectly correct to speak of a consolidated populist dictatorship employing the tools of a single party and the myth of the *Volk*. Not only the ancient German traditions, but also the very concept of Reich and, as we shall see, the concept of race were brought by Hitler to the level of the masses, which implied their degradation and distortion. Still, in this context they became tools of great power. Last but not least, Hitler's success derived from having restored for the masses, the *Volk*, the validity of ideas and symbols of a higher German legacy that kept its power, so to speak, in the collective unconscious despite everything, a power to which Hitler appealed.

Considering these aspects, as is obvious, very little can be gathered about the Third Reich that is objectively valid, beyond historical contingency. Everything gravitated around a man with exceptional abilities for captivating, transporting, arousing and fanaticising the people, while he himself presented under more than one aspect the traits of a possessed person, as if an extraordinary force were acting through him, giving him lucidity and iron logic in action, but depriving him of every sense of limit. These are the character traits that differ strikingly between Hitler and Mussolini. In Mussolini, the outstanding traits were those of a person who maintained control and a certain distance when exploiting opportunities. Naturally, in a system gravitating to this degree around a *Führer* like the Third Reich, a stable future was not conceivable. Constitutionally it was possible to have a type of tribunate of the people. In reality, however, had the war not ended in military defeat, a vacuum would have appeared after Hitler's death, since it would not have been possible to bring to power, in a continuing succession, men possessing Hitler's exceptional individual qualities, which alone assured him power and made him the system's centre of gravity. The *Führer-Staat* would necessarily have had to yield to a different order. As long as Hitler lived and fortune was on his side, his galvanising power succeeded in holding everything together and inspiring unbelievable achievements up to the last hour, up to the edge of the abyss. The complete ideological collapse of Germany after 1945, however, when that tension failed — not comparable to the one that followed its defeat in the First World War — shows how superficial was the effect of his magnetic action on the masses in spite of the power of 'myths' and the strict totalitarian organisation.

It was then, at the foundation of the *Führer-Staat* after Hindenburg's death, that diverse exponents of the 'Conservative Revolution' recognised clearly the gap that existed between their ideals and the new state, seeing in this state a falsification or profanation of their ideals and blaming it for a break with the preceding tradition.

There were some who left Germany (like Hermann Rauschning,[32] former Nazi President of the Senate of Danzig, who attacked the Third Reich violently in 1936 in a book published abroad entitled *The Revolution of Nihilism*: *Appearances and Reality in the Third Reich*.[33] Others stayed in Germany, but withdrew into silence and occupied themselves with literature (like Jünger and von Salomon).[34] Still others suffered persecution. Some — and not a few — remained politically active because they hoped for a progressive rectification and accentuation of everything in the Third Reich that, in spite of everything, possessed a certain connection with their ideas.

In fact, in the Prussian tradition there had been a principle of acting *for* the people, while holding it at a distance, but not *through* the people, which would mean being led by it after an adequate politicising and enabling, according to the chief Jacobin[35] model. This principle was the foundation of what was called the 'Prussian

[32] Hermann Rauschning (1887-1982) was a war veteran who was a landowner in Danzig. In 1932, he joined the NSDAP, believing that it was the best hope for the reunification of Danzig with Germany, and was elected President of the Senate of Danzig in June 1933. Unlike the Nazis, however, he was a traditional conservative, and disliked their extreme anti-Semitism. In 1934, he resigned from the Party, and in 1935, he began to support an alliance of Danzig with Poland rather than Germany, as well as non-Nazi candidates in the government. Realising that his life was in danger, he fled Danzig in 1936, ending up in the United States, where he became a citizen. He wrote several works that were critical of Hitler's regime and which were taken up by Allied propaganda efforts during the war, based in part on conversations Rauschning claimed to have had with Hitler, in which Hitler revealed his true, anti-Christian and megalomaniacal ambitions, and supposed mental illness. Since Rauschning's death, the consensus among historians has been that these alleged conversations were fabrications.

[33] The Revolution of Nihilism: Warning to the West (New York: Alliance Book Corporation, 1942). The subtitle is different in the text because Evola is referring to the Italian edition, which had a different subtitle.

[34] Ernst von Salomon (1902-1972) was a German military cadet who joined the Freikorps in 1919 in order to counter the liberal aims of the Weimar Republic. He wrote books about his experiences which show a strong Conservative Revolutionary orientation. He assisted the assassins of Foreign Minister Walther Rathenau, who was a Jew, in 1922, an event which was hailed by the Nazis. After serving a prison sentence, however, von Salomon rejected National Socialism, and he became a screenwriter in Germany. He married a Jewish woman and protected her throughout the Third Reich, and reportedly he rescued other Jews as well; nevertheless, he was imprisoned by the Allies after the war under accusation of having been a Nazi supporter.

[35] The Jacobin Club, a political group in eighteenth-century France, was one of the driving forces of the French Revolution. Since then, 'Jacobin' has often been used as a generic term for Left-wing radicals.

socialism'[36] or even the 'social monarchy' of the Hohenzollerns.[37] With the *Führer-Staat*, the authority that, at least keeping to the corresponding ideology, was drawn from the masses or the collective force of the *Volk*, and with the unarticulated pairing of *Volk-Führer*, Germany found itself in a line opposed to the one that had given life to Prussia and had been fundamental in the Second Reich as well. In fact, Prussia had been the creation of a dynasty that had the nobility, the army and the higher bureaucracy for its backbone. The primary element was not the 'nation' or the *Volk*. Rather the state, more than the land or the *ethnos*,[38] constituted the real foundation and unifying principle. There was none of that in Hitlerism — at least in the area of general political ideology. The state was conceived as a secondary and instrumental reality, while the primary formative, moving and bearing force was supposed to be the *Volk* with the *Führer* as its representative and incarnation. This is why some have correctly emphasised the difference between the doctrines of National Socialism and Italian Fascism, because in Fascism's doctrine, although it could not count on a tradition even remotely comparable with the Prussian tradition as its antecedent, the state — as we have seen — enjoyed primacy in respect to 'nation' and 'people.' For some Nazi writers, whose infatuation was equal to their disavowal of the history of their own country, this aspect of Fascism was supposed to be a 'Roman' trait, which was extraneous to 'German nature.' This was the source of the attack on supra-national state structures, like that formerly presented by the Habsburg Empire.[39] The fundamental slogan for this system was *ein Reich*, *ein Volk*, *ein Führer* — that is, one people unified in one Reich following one *Führer*. Because of the blind insistence on uniting all German elements living outside the country's borders, it was among the causes that, after the brief mirage of the *Gross Deutschland*, Great Germany, was to lead to an adventure that ended in catastrophe, while it was destined to contradict

[36] The term Prussian socialism was first coined by Oswald Spengler in a book of the same name. He held that the Prussian monarchy had always governed according to socialist principles.

[37] The House of Hohenzollern is a noble family which contributed many monarchs to Germany, Prussia and Rumania over the course of nearly a thousand years. In this case, Evola is referring to the Hohenzollerns who ruled the German Empire. In 1891, with Kaiser Wilhelm's support (and in opposition to the wishes of Bismarck, who was dismissed over the row), the Reichstag passed the Workers Protection Acts, which improved working conditions for Germany's workers and formalised labour relations.

[38] Greek: 'nation,' in the sense of a people with a shared culture and language.

[39] The Habsburg Empire, or the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was a loose confederation of Central European states that existed between 1867 and 1918, and which supplanted the earlier Austrian Empire, which was also ruled by the Habsburg monarchy.

itself when, despite everything, because of the re-emergence of Pan-Germanism or a desire for hegemony, or the expansionist theory of the so-called 'living space,'[40] the Third Reich reasserted its power over territories beyond the limits of *Deutschtum*, ethnic 'Germanicity,' with which, according to the older formula, it should have been contented.

Casting an eye retrospectively on this period, Ernst von Salomon, a writer who had served in Captain Ehrhardt's brigade and had been implicated in the assassination of Walther Rathenau,[41] said, 'We understood that the first serious and significant attempt of the national movement to provoke a change in Germany's situation by proceeding from on high, from the state in other words, in more or less the same sense desired by the exponents of a "conservative revolution" had failed because of this man, Adolf Hitler.' Von Salomon, expressing the point of view of other personalities of the same group, added, 'Every attempt to move the essential accent from the state to the people, from authority to the collective, should be considered an absurd and abject betrayal of the true goal of the national movement… There could not be, from the historical point of view, any bridge between the state idea and the populist one of the essence of the nation. This fact, unfortunately, was disguised by the disorienting circumstance that the populist formula used the same vocabulary and boasted of being a renewed conception of the state.'[42] Von Salomon, however, together with others (for instance, Armin Mohler)[43] also recognised that the failure was due to the fact that Rightist circles refused to use the means employed by Hitler to have the masses with them (nor did they possess corresponding abilities). To allow themselves to be carried away by a mass movement that had to be politicised and fanaticised with propaganda, setting every scruple aside, was contrary to their anti-demagogic

[40] The Nazis held that the German people needed more territory in order to continue to grow and develop. The doctrine of lebensraum pre-dates the Nazis, but Hitler occasionally invoked it as a justification for German expansion into Eastern Europe, although some historians have disputed whether this was an actual Nazi doctrine.

[41] Walther Rathenau (1867-1922), a German Jew and industrialist, served in the War Ministry during the First World War and then as part of the reconstruction efforts in post-war Germany. Although opposed to liberalism and socialism, the Right in Germany saw him as an enemy, and he was assassinated by Freikorps soldiers on 24 June 1922, in the hopes that his death would hasten the collapse of the government.

[42] From Ernst von Salomon, Der Fragebogen (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1951). English edition: The Answers of Ernst von Salomon to the 131 Questions in the Allied Military Government Fragebogen (London: Putnam, 1954).

[43] Armin Mohler (1920-2003) was a Swiss political writer whose work did much to preserve the legacy of Germany's Conservative Revolution. He was also a supporter of the European New Right.

mentality and seemed to them a 'rather dirty' affair. This is the source of their position of inferiority in front of Hitler, who, on the contrary, had understood the situation tied to the times. As we have said, before the facts became apparent, those who were the guardians of tradition were under the illusion that they could make use of Hitler as an instrument (just as the King of Italy believed he could use Mussolini to create a national revolution in his stead). As we have seen, however, more or less the opposite happened.

III

If, however, the Third Reich abandoned the tradition of the Prussian state, it picked up and used quite a few of the fundamental traits of the Prussian character and lifestyle. These traits, when Prussia ceased to be an independent kingdom with the founding of the Second Empire, went on to be formative in other parts of Germany. So if one wanted to seek out the ultimate formula for the success of the Third Reich, one should look for it in the union of two elements. The first was fanaticizing the *Volk*, the masses, with the cult of the *Führer*, which at times reached extremes bordering on hysteria. Anyone, for instance, who has heard Hess, Hitler's lieutenant, shouting hysterically at the Party's convention at Nuremberg, 'Germany is Hitler! Hitler is Germany!' which was received by the frenetic screams of hundreds of thousands of people, must have got the impression of a real phenomenon of possession. The second element, however, associated with everything that was encouraged by directing mass manifestations of an unparalleled impressiveness, was the legacy of some 'Prussian' dispositions, which tried to keep itself alive in the people and in the very cadres of the Party with a parallel action. Meanwhile, it continued to serve especially as guardian of the Reichswehr, which, even though 'integrated' into the Third Reich, maintained its own internal autonomy and even moved itself to a certain distance, while Hitler, using rather indirect means honestly speaking, removed generals von Blomberg[1] and von Fritsch[2] from their positions as commanders and replaced them with himself.[3]

[1] Werner von Blomberg (1878-1946) was appointed to be Minister of Defence in 1933, in Hitler's new government. In 1934, he had the Reichswehr pledge their loyalty to Hitler personally and in 1935 he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. In 1937, however, when Hitler expressed his desire for Germany to begin expanding into Central Europe, von Blomberg voiced his objections, fearing that such moves would provoke France and Britain into declaring war on Germany.

[2] Werner von Fritsch (1880-1939) was a Nazi supporter who was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht in 1935. He soon came to dislike Nazi policies and the SS in particular, which he saw as a rival to the Wehrmacht.

[3] In 1938, dissatisfied with the lack of support from von Blomberg and von Fritsch for Hitler's intended objectives, the leadership began looking for reasons to oust them. Von Blomberg was married in January 1938, and shortly thereafter it was revealed that his wife had an earlier criminal record of prostitution in Berlin. Marrying a spouse with a criminal record was a violation of the officers' code of conduct. Hitler ordered von Blomberg to annul the marriage, but he refused. When Hermann Göring threatened

It is the concordant action of these two factors that coherently sustained Hitler's state by encouraging exceptional performances. It is very silly to think that this state could have existed only thanks to a regime of terror and oppression. Such a regime could not have produced the impulse for so many accomplishments, such as earning the sincere admiration of so many foreigners at the Olympics of 1936,[4] nor can it explain the virtues of the entire population and the armed forces, which required six years of ruthless war and the combined forces of almost the entire world to defeat the Third Reich militarily, and thanks to which Germany held firm almost to the last without a complaint or a rebellion, and indeed with miraculous recoveries after every destruction and horror. There are examples such as those of the Hitler Youth in combat, who were certainly not under the threat of the pistols of the Gestapo, and who participated in the desperate defence of Berlin, where they hunted the gigantic Soviet T-34 tanks. One of their divisions in the Teutoburg Forest compelled an American armoured division to retreat after inflicting heavy losses on them, earning the Iron Cross.[5] We can also speak of the fanaticism aroused by the arts and spells of a great wizard. The whole cannot be explained, however, without the other side, a love for discipline, the spirit of impersonal and eventually heroic dedication and fidelity, and so a factor essentially different from fanaticism, which must be related to the *second* of the components we have discussed. Naturally this is also the point of view of those who have accused Hitler of having abused the intrinsic gifts of the German and using them to thrust Germany along a road that led to ruin.

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to make the information public, von Blomberg resigned. Pleased with the outcome, Göring and Himmler then produced evidence showing that von Fritsch was a homosexual. It soon turned out that the evidence had actually been gathered on another officer, but von Fritsch's resignation was secured when witnesses were found to press the case against him. Von Fritsch was soon exonerated, but Hitler refused to reinstate him, and he was reduced to being the Colonel of an artillery unit. He was killed during the invasion of Poland in 1939; many believed that he deliberately sought death in combat.

[4] The 1936 Summer Olympics were held in Berlin, which allowed the Nazis to showcase the achievements of their regime.

[5] Evola is mistaken about this story. There was a battle in the Teutoburg Forest on 2-3 April 1945, although the defenders were not from the Hitler Youth, but were rather military cadets from the Hanover Officers' School, and the attackers were British infantry, not American tanks. It is correct that the cadets were successful in routing the British, inflicting heavy casualties on them, and in fact nearly overran their headquarters, although they were forced to surrender the following day when large British reinforcements arrived. Evola may have mistaken this battle for an earlier one, when the 12th SS Panzer Divison Hitlerjugend, which was comprised largely of recruits from the Hitler Youth, succeeded in forcing the retreat of a Canadian tank column at Normandy on 7 June 1944, the second day of the D-Day invasion.

But these aspects fall outside the primary field within which we would like to maintain our considerations. Thus we ought to pass on to examine briefly and judge some concrete aspects of the Third Reich and its institutions.

On the subject of social assistance for the benefit of the lower classes, Hitler's Germany placed itself ahead of all nations, with only Fascist Italy at its side. This was a direct part of Hitler's politics, understood as having the working class with him. He assured them a maximum of bourgeois comfort, and by adopting the insipid slogan of the 'nobility of labour' gave workers a particular 'consciousness.' Sometimes, however, he went too far, which gave us the first taste of the presumptuous rabble with more money than they know what to do with, and which, like a real plague in our days, proliferates in the 'consumer society.' Anyone who has seen the masses of 'Aryan' *Volksgenossen* (the comrades of the stock, the *Volk*) of the KdF[6] (a sort of first class 'workers' club' or Nazi ENAL, the National Agency for Workers' Assistance)[7] and the presumption of the evolved and 'deproletarianised' Berlin worker cannot suppress a shiver of horror at the prospect of a Germany that might have developed in that direction.

[NOTE: In the Nazi period there was a popular joke that was based on wordplay. Question: What is the difference between Russia and Germany? Answer: Russia is a *Proletarierstaat* (a proletarian state), Germany a *Proletarierstaat* (which is the same word, but when divided in this way it means 'state of Aryan proletarians').]

Different Nazi initiatives for National Socialist solidarity often had a compulsory character, while the desire was to make them appear spontaneous. Especially deplorable among all of them was the institution of the *Reichsarbeitsdienst*, or Reich Labour Service, which a law of 26 June 1935 made obligatory for all youth of both sexes. The act aimed at consolidating the *Volksgemeinschaft*, that is, the social community under the banner of the *Volk* (but not without a certain Jacobin sadism). It made service work that had at first been voluntary into a general obligation, and imposed on every young person of both sexes a certain period of manual work, together with other youths from the most

[6] The Kraft durch Freude, or Strength through Joy organisation, was a Nazi initiative that sought to engage the German working class in leisure activities normally reserved for the upper classes, such as concerts and vacation trips.

[7] The National Agency for Workers' Assistance was the successor organisation to the National Recreation Club, which sought to provide leisure for the Italian workers by engaging them in sports and similar activities, although it never reached the scale of Strength through Joy.

diverse classes — a girl of the aristocracy could thus find herself living in a community with a country girl or a working-class girl in a farm or a factory. Naturally, often the effect of this 'tool of political national education' was the opposite of the law's intent. This is not the only case of that totalitarian intrusion of the public into the private sphere that we have already faulted in some aspects of Fascism as well, such as, for instance, Fascism's conception of the schoolmarmish 'ethical state,' its demographic campaign to increase the birth-rates and its virtual imposition of *voi*, the second person plural, in polite speech.[8] The presence of a proletarian aspect in Nazism is undeniable, as in the figure of Hitler himself, who had none of the traits of a 'gentleman,' of an aristocratic type *di razza*.[9] This proletarian aspect and even vulgarity of National Socialism was often noticed, especially in Austria after its annexation to the Reich and after the phase of a rash 'national' infatuation of Austrians for 'Greater Germany.'

Gleichschaltung, the levelling integration aiming at a totalitarian unification, also had negative effects in some particular domains. For instance, it led to the compulsory dissolution of student clubs that with their customs, traditions of honour and *esprit de corps* (especially among the so-called *Korpsstudenten*)[10] had been one of the sites of character formation for a certain class. The entire student youth was instead herded into a single organisation controlled by the Party.

As for what concerns the economic domain, Hitler had already affirmed the preeminence of the political problems and a definite vision of life over economic problems. He had proclaimed that 'the state has nothing to do with any particular economic idea or with a particular development of the economy' and that 'the state is an organism of the *Volk* and not an economic organisation.'[11] For some time he had warned of the danger that the trade union movement might become an influential political force that could pave the way for a Marxist takeover of the state. 'The National Socialist trade union,' he had written, 'is not a tool of the class struggle, but rather an organisation for professional representation.'[12] Once he was securely in

[8] Believing that the use of voi would instil a greater sense of camaraderie amongst the various classes of the Italian people, the Fascists launched an aggressive campaign in the newspapers to promote its use.

[9] Italian: 'of race.' Evola, like Spengler and other authors of the Conservative Revolution, holds that one who is 'of race' represents the highest qualities of a particular people. This elite, therefore, are the only genuine representatives of a people.

[10] The German Student Corps are student organisations in German schools which have their origins in the fifteenth century, similar to fraternities.

[11] Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, Book I, Chapter 4, 'Munich.'

[12] Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, Book II, Chapter 12, 'The Trade Union Question.'

power, Hitler courageously completed the decisive step. After May 1 was solemnly declared the 'national labour holiday' (in imitation of the analogous initiative by Italian Fascism) with a demonstration that aroused great enthusiasm, the next day all the headquarters of the trade unions were occupied in a surprise action and, as an added precaution, many trade union leaders were arrested.[13] It was announced that 'free' trade unions had been dissolved and their property had been confiscated by the state. On the basis of what we have said earlier when speaking of Fascist institutions, an action like this should be considered, from our point of view, in completely positive terms. After this, Germany proceeded to reorganise labour and the economy by means of the 'corporatist' reconstruction of businesses. We shall not dwell on this aspect of the Third Reich's legislation, because we have already spoken of it in faulting the defects of Fascist state corporatism. Let us therefore recall only that the reform had for its virtual model the Medieval organic and corporatist structures, which various exponents of the 'national revolution' reappraised and adopted as a precursor and as the foundation of a 'third way' beyond degenerate capitalism and Marxism. The spirit of the reform was to move beyond classism and the class struggle within each business insofar as each of them were to develop a solidarity between the interests and performances of all its elements and reaffirm the *Führerprinzip*, that is, the relationship between a chief (*Führer*, entrepreneur) and his 'retinue' (management, the staff), who were united by relations of mutual fidelity. To iron out eventual disagreements and what could affect interests even on the national level, 'labour trustees' were appointed by the Party. Even the possibility of appeal to a 'Social Honour Court' was considered.[14] According to the terms of the law of 20 January 1934, 'In the enterprise the entrepreneur as chief (*Führer*) of the business and the staff and workers as his retinue (*Gefolgschaft*) will work concretely to accomplish the goals of the enterprise and for the common profit of the nation and the state.'[15] The malfunctioning of a big company was no longer to be considered a mere private affair, but was looked upon as a type of political crime. In principle there was no obligation for individual businesses as autonomous unities to join the 'German Labour

[13] This occurred on 2 May 1933. The trade unions were replaced by the German Labour Front.

[14] In the Third Reich, Social Honour Courts were established to mediate between the workers and the business owners in factories. Although modified by them, this was actually not an innovation of the National Socialists, as similar courts had existed in Germany prior to the Third Reich.

[15] This was the Labour Organisation Law, which formalised labour relations, formerly negotiated by the trade unions until their banning, under the auspices of the German Labour Front.

Front.'[16] Further, joining the Front did not entail a top-down regulation, as in Fascist corporatism. The original programme of the Party had already indicated one of its objectives as being *Brechung der Zinsknechtschaft*, an expression that could be translated as the elimination of the serfdom imposed by pure, finance capitalists by means of interest rates.[17] In other words, if the entrepreneur-capitalist was respected and his authority was reinforced with a political and moral chrism, the Party opposed the simple financier-capitalist 'of the Hebrew type,' who was foreign to the productive process. This orientation can be ascribed to the credit of National Socialism.

In addition, under these new laws, the private economy in the Third Reich could develop with great liberty. The large industrial complexes remained, and they reinforced and enlivened that sense of solidarity of the various elements that, in great part, had already previously characterised them, beyond Marxism and trade unionism. The government did not proceed to take over businesses in the name of the state, the nation or society. Some radical articles of the Party's program (articles 13 and 14)[18] in this area were set aside. The principle of 'levelling integration' found here salutary limits, so that there are those who would speak of Hitler's collusion with the 'barons of industry.' In reality, it was a question of a national front where each stood at his post and had a fruitful and responsible liberty of initiative. This system showed its greatest efficacy in the Third Reich and passed every test until the end. Unemployment not only disappeared rapidly, but there were sometimes insufficient workers for the tasks to which the state was committed for the completion of its plans for reconstruction, development and national greatness.

Concerning trade policy, to a certain degree the Third Reich followed the principle of autarchy to assure a maximum degree of economic independence.

[16] After 1933, the Nazis' German Labour Front was the only trade union organisation. Workers were not required to join it, although finding employment without being a member was very difficult.

[17] On 24 February 1920, Hitler read out a 25-point programme at a meeting of the nascent NSDAP which had been developed jointly by the Party's leadership. The opposition to 'interest slavery' was Point 11, along with the demand for the abolition of incomes not earned by work. It was introduced by Gottfried Feder, an economist affiliated with the early NSDAP (and one of its original founders), who was strongly anti-capitalist. Although the programme always remained the Party's official doctrine, it was largely ignored in later years, as was Feder himself. A translation of the programme was made in Germany and has been reprinted many times; Gottfried Feder, The Programme of the N.S.D.A.P.: and its General Conceptions (Munich: Franz Eher Verlag, 1932).

[18] Point 13 called for the state to assume control of all large businesses. Point 14 called for profit-sharing in large businesses.

Hjalmar Schacht,[19] a man of the Right and a prestigious restorer of the German economy during the Weimar Republic, formulated Schacht's Law: 'We should not buy from countries where the goods are cheapest, but instead from those where we can pay for them primarily with our own exports.'

Another positive aspect of the Third Reich concerns the defence of the peasant or small farmer. In this regard it is necessary to remember the dignity that the central European *Bauer*, or small farmer, had preserved and that differentiated him from the small farmer of southern Latin countries, where the title of 'peasant' (*contadino*) is almost synonymous with impoverished. A German farmer could proclaim with pride, 'I come from an old family of peasants.' Hitler followed the ideas of R. Walther Darré,[20] whom he made Reich Minister for Agriculture, in what concerns 'blood and soil.'[21] A farming community that remained faithful to its land was seen as the source of the healthiest forces of blood, race and *Volk*. On this subject, Darré had written a book[22] where he sought to justify this idea with reference to the ancient Indo-European ('Aryan') cultures. (He wrote another, more recent book — it was published in 1930 — with the title *A New Nobility Based on Blood and Earth*.)[23] There were precursors for this idea in Germany. We can recall the 'anti-modernist' ideas of W. H. Riehl,[24] who saw in the peasant the only social stratum beside the nobility that was 'not rootless.' They even coined the watchword, 'freedom of the Earth from money,' which some groups had even tried to translate into practice in a utopian fashion with corresponding 'colonies' (*Siedelungen*). In addition, the deplorable situation had been drastically outlined already toward the end of the nineteenth century in a rather popular novel by W. von Polenz[25] called *Der Büttnerbauer*,[26] which described the tragedy of an old peasant whose family farm, because of the debts he was forced to contract, had been mortgaged and then sold by the moneylender (a Jew — using one

[19] Hjalmar Schacht (1877-1970) was a German economist and politician who was President of the Reichsbank from 1923 until 1930, and again from 1933 until 1939.

[20] Richard Walther Darré (1895-1953) was also a pioneer in the ecological field.

[21] Blood and soil, which was a cornerstone of Nazi ideology, held that the national community should be based on people of common blood who have an intimate relationship with their native land.

[22] Richard Walther Darré, Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der Nordischen Rasse (The Peasantry as the Source of Life of the Nordic Race, Munich: Lehmann, 1929).

[23] Richard Walther Darré, Neuadel aus blut und boden (Munich: J. F. Lehmann, 1930).

[24] Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1823-1897) was a German writer who was instrumental in developing the Völkisch ideology.

[25] Wilhelm von Polenz (1861-1903) was a German novelist of the naturalist school.

[26] Wilhelm von Polenz, Der Büttnerbauer (Berlin: F. Fontane & Co., 1913).

of the typical Jewish stereotypes) to a group of speculators that built a factory on it. When he saw this, the old peasant committed suicide. In the period of the Weimar Republic, however, in some regions like Schleswig-Holstein, there were even revolutionary movements of peasants against the sequestrations and mortgages to which their property had been exposed not only because of debt, but also heavy taxation.

At any rate, the Third Reich, although far from averse to industry, energetically undertook to prevent 'the uprooting of the peasants' (therefore, implicitly, their exodus to cities) and to protect the natural base of their existence, that is, their own property, not only against expropriation and economic speculation, but also against the breaking up of farmland and debt. At the centre stood the concept of *Erbhof*, or an inalienable hereditary plot or farm, which was transmitted to a single heir, specifically whoever was most qualified (which corresponded to a centuries-old custom); to preserve through the generations, 'the inheritance of the stock in the hands of free peasants.' The state was ready to help, when certain circumstances threatened the existence and integrity of this *Erbhof*. Expropriations and repartitions of large farms were not to be undertaken except in rare exceptional cases of negligence or maladministration. For many large, landed estates, the same conservative principle was followed. They were protected according to fixed legal provisions. In fact, the traditional base of the *Junker* was precisely landed estates, with an almost feudal background. The Third Reich thus extended in a certain way the principle that had induced Frederick the Great[27] in 1748 to promulgate laws that forbade not only the growth of the state at the expense of the property of the nobility, but also its alienation and commercial sale, preventing it from passing into the hands of the class of wealthy bourgeois speculators. There is no need to say that, from our point of view, these initiatives of the Third Reich, which evinced a healthy anti-modern spirit and were in no way 'totalitarian,' are to be judged among the most positive. The disastrous condition to which democratic liberties in Italy have currently brought agriculture and the countryside proves our point. Even here, however, lack of tradition plays a role.

[27] Frederick II (1712-1786) was the King of Prussia from 1740, known as 'the Great,' who was credited with modernising the Prussian army and was known as a brilliant strategist. He also introduced modern economic reforms into the Prussian state.

IV

After this we shall pass to a brief examination of aspects of the Third Reich that are relevant to race, its worldview and the Jewish problem.

We have already mentioned the racial background presented by the concept of *Volk*, which gave rise to a type of 'ethnic nationalism' or 'nationalism of birth.' Point 4 of the original programme of the National Socialist Party already distinguished the true citizen (*Reichsbürger*) from the 'member of the state' (*Staatsangehöriger*) on a biological and racial basis in the following terms: 'He alone is to be considered a citizen with full rights who is a comrade by birth (*Volksgenossen*) and is of German blood without regard to religious confession.' The concept of 'member of the state' is, on the other hand, purely juridical. It refers to all those who are bound by a simple, formal membership in the state only by not being foreigners. Hitler had considered scandalous the fact that, for so long, the ethnic-racial concept of citizenship was not taken into account, that acquisition of citizenship could 'take place no differently from admission to an automobile club;' that is, all it would take is 'a request so that, by the decision of a bureaucrat, something happens that not even Heaven can do: a stroke of a pen and a Zulu or a Mongol becomes a pure German.'[1] Birth in a German territory could define the simple quality of being a 'member of the state.' By itself, it should not give the right to hold public office or exercise political activity. According to the views expressed by Hitler in his *Mein Kampf*, becoming a 'citizen,' a real member of the Reich, would require a further validation, based, in addition to race, on physical health and then on an oath of allegiance, solemnly sworn and shown to the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the community of birth. Only then would the applicant receive a 'certificate of citizenship,' which would be 'like a bond that unites all classes and covers every abyss.' Hitler goes so far as to affirm that 'being a street cleaner in a Reich like this would signify a greater honour than being a king in a foreign state.'[2] With these words and others like them that attest a completely plebeian spirit, Hitler offered as much as was needed so that any German who was not born from the mixture with 'non-Aryan' or Jewish blood could raise his head. In addition, in Point 6 of the original programme of the Nazi party he says, 'The

[1] Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, Book II, Chapter 3, 'Subjects and Citizens of the State.'
[2] Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, Book II, Chapter 3, 'Subjects and Citizens of the State.'

right to decide on the direction of the state can be recognised only for citizens who are comrades by birth. Therefore we request that any public office in the Reich, in the provinces and the districts be occupied by a citizen of the Reich.'

Once he had seized power, he began implementing this programme. Early retirement was granted all those bureaucrats who did not merit the full qualification of 'comrade by birth.' (The requirement for this was not having Jewish blood, or blood from another non-Aryan race, in one's ancestry going back three generations.) The same provision was then adopted in regard to those functionaries who, although they were 'Aryan,' had nevertheless married or planned to marry a woman who belonged to a non-Aryan race. In the case of a *fait accompli*, that is of a functionary, official, professor, and so on who had married a non-Aryan women before the promulgation of these laws, the choice was left of divorce or losing his position. At first some exceptions were made for veterans or relatives of decorated veterans who had fallen in the First World War. Other exceptions could be considered by the Ministry of the Interior in agreement with an official who was a specialist in matters related to functionaries stationed abroad, for whom an essentially discretionary and pragmatic criterion was followed. Other exceptions could be dictated by reasons of state for those who had deserved well of the Reich. Hence the curious qualification of *Ehrenarier*, or 'honorary Aryan,' which however should strictly speaking have had as counterpart the title of *Ehrenjude*, that is, 'honorary Jew,' 'honorary Levantine,' and so on, to be applied to the many who, although biologically 'Aryan,' were not so in character, behaviour or spirit.

Other laws extended similar measures even beyond the narrowly political and governmental sphere to the cultural, professional and even religious sphere. In regard to religion, the 'Aryan clause' created conflicts with both Catholics and Protestants because, on the basis of the clause, pastors and holders of other religious offices in the two churches who had had ancestors of non-Aryan blood up to the third generation could not be authorised to exercise their functions in the Third Reich. This was naturally unacceptable from the Christian point of view, which is that of the essential equality of all creatures and of the super-racial character of the priesthood, which in Catholicism is established only by a sacrament. The only Christians who accepted the new disposition were the so-called German Christians in the Protestant camp, who voted for certain laws and elected bishops who were dependent on a central bishop of the Reich who was obliged to swear loyalty to the head of state, that is, Hitler.

Similarly, there were plans to form a 'German National Church'[3] (Rosenberg, Hauer,[4] Bergmann,[5] etc.).

The racial idea affected the political idea so strongly that Hitler wrote, 'The state represents not an end but a means. It is the premise for the formation of a superior human culture, without being, however, the principle that creates such a culture. This principle, or cause, is uniquely the presence of a race that is fit for culture. Even if there had been hundreds of model states on the Earth, should Aryan man, the bearer of culture, become extinct, there would no longer be a culture at the spiritual level of today's superior nations… We must distinguish with the greatest accuracy the state, which is the "vessel," from the race, which is the "content." This vessel has a purpose only if it is capable of holding and protecting the content. Otherwise it makes no sense.'[6] 'The defence of the race' is therefore proposed as the primary goal of the state. This is the source of the so-called 'Laws for the Defence of German Blood and Honour.'[7] On the one hand, prohibiting mixed marriages and even mixed unions, under the penalty of suffering the consequences, was intended to protect the racial substance of the body of citizens of the Reich from further mutating crossbreeding. Later, various eugenic measures were considered that were intended to prevent, even among 'Aryan' Germans, offspring who were genetically tainted.

The role that 'myth' played in all this is clear, as well as its confusing the concept of 'race' with the concept of the nation (which ends up basically democratising and

[3] The German Faith Movement was the outcome of this goal. It was based in part on the Nazis' notion of a 'Positive Christianity,' which meant a form of Christianity purged of Jewish influence and transcending the Catholic/Protestant split, as well as including elements derived from Hinduism, Germanic paganism and other sources, particularly Nazi ideology. Although tolerated, the Movement never had more than 200,000 members, and never received official blessings from the Nazi leadership, who feared angering the traditional churches. C. G. Jung praised the Movement in his essay, 'Wotan.'

[4] Jakob Wilhelm Hauer (1881-1962) had served as a missionary in India for several years, which caused him to lose faith in Christianity. He attended the University of Oxford and attained a doctorate in Sanskrit, and then taught as an Indologist in Germany. He founded the German Faith Movement in 1934, but left it in 1936, remaining close to the Nazi leadership. After the war he continued in efforts to create his own religious institution.

[5] Ernst Bergmann (1881-1945) was a German philosopher and a member of the NSDAP who held that Jesus was not a Jew, but rather an Aryan, and that Hitler was the new messiah. He wrote books advocating for a new German religion which earned him a place on the Vatican's list of banned authors. He committed suicide at the end of the war.

[6] Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, Book II, Chapter 2, 'The State.'

[7] This law was enacted on 15 September 1935, forbidding marriages and extramarital relations between Jews and Germans.

degrading the former). Further, no thought was given to defining in positive, even spiritual, terms the concept of 'Aryan.' It implicitly allowed every German to think that he was preeminently the 'Aryan' to whom was attributed the creation and origin of every higher culture. This was the incentive for a baleful arrogance that was more than nationalist (and completely foreign to the traditional Right). It had, on the one hand, an undeniable efficacy in the emotional mobilisation of the German masses, but also deleterious consequences, *inter alia*, in the policy followed by Nazi Germany in occupied territories, as we shall discuss later. In reality, when the more serious racialist authors had spoken of the 'Aryan,' they had had in view a rather extensive genus in which 'German' (and also 'Germanic') could figure only as a particular species. Houston Stewart Chamberlain himself,[8] who was highly respected by Alfred Rosenberg, the principal ideologue of Nazism, had used 'Aryan' to refer to a 'Celtic-German-Slavic complex.'

If, therefore, the concept of race had an unclear content in National Socialist propaganda and legislation and suffered a collectivising degradation, on the other hand a different and more selective direction was asserted in the Third Reich, although less officially. Here the reader can return to what we have said in considering the sense, purpose and acceptable aspects of the 'racist' turn of Italian Fascism. If generic racism was a simple expedient for reinforcing national self-consciousness — here, as we have said, the attitude was not very different from the one assumed by England in its empire concerning other races, for instance — since modern race doctrine does not consider only the large-scale anthropological divisions, but also 'races' as special articulations inside each race, including the White or 'Aryan' race, we should recognise that, in reference to this scholarship, Germany does not represent the expression of a single, pure and homogeneous racial stock, but in general is a mixture of several 'races' (in this second, more differentiated sense). This is the basis for the move to a second-level racism, so to speak. The collectivist idea that the Aryan-German *Volk* and *Volksgemeinschaft* should be delimited, defended and manipulated in a totalitarian fashion on the basis of *Gleichschaltung* came to be replaced by the idea that not all the racial components of the German people had the same value, and that the higher, more qualified element was that of the Nordic or 'Nordid' race. In addition, plans were developed that were intended to develop this component in the Third Reich, to guarantee it positions of

[8] Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855-1927) was an English philosopher whose ideas about the supremacy of the Germanic peoples, as outlined in his most fundamental book, The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century, became highly influential upon the German racialist movement.

supremacy. With an eye now not only on the biological element, but also on definite gifts of character and a definite vision of life, the term *Aufnordung* was coined, that is the 'Nordification,' of the German people. To elevate it, it would be necessary to try to give a prevalent 'Nordic' stamp to the German people. If this initiative was not asserted in the Third Reich in the official seats of power, it was, however, viewed from on high with sympathy and played a significant role in some organisations of which we shall soon speak, notably the SS.

Nevertheless, to the German man in the street there was no lack of motives for rather ironic reflections about the state of affairs, because, in relation to race, Hitler was not at all a pure 'Nordic' type, nor were his closest collaborators and the heads of the Party, like Goebbels, Himmler himself, Ley, Bormann, and so on. (At most one could mention Rosenberg, Heydrich and von Schirach).[9] On the other hand, Hindenburg and Bismarck were physically of Nordic stock, but 'Phalic,'[10] while the Nordic element in the Prussian was strongly mixed with the 'Ostid' (Slavic). If anywhere, the Nordic element could be rather clearly recognised especially in the officer corps, the aristocracy and some non-urban stocks in the provinces.

At any rate, from our point of view, for a global evaluation of German racism, the German-Aryan presumption under which, as Hitler proclaimed, being a street sweeper in the Reich should be considered a greater honour than being the king of a foreign country, should seem a demagogic aberration. Nonetheless, the fact remains that, even from the point of view of the Right, a certain balanced consciousness and dignity of 'race' can be considered as salutary, if we think where we have ended up in our days with the exaltation of the Negro and all the rest, the psychosis of anti-colonialism, and 'integrationist' fanaticism, all of which are phenomena occurring parallel to the decline of Europe and the West as a whole. In the second place, when dealing with Fascism, we have already recognised the legitimacy that could be offered by the ideal of a new, superior human type at the centre of a general process of crystallisation, rectification and formation of a nation's substance, on the condition that we do not excessively emphasise the biological aspect in this ideal, but only if we particularly stress the 'race of the spirit.' Instead, in National Socialist racism it was precisely this biological aspect that played a significant role and indulged in wishful thinking by means of a 'scientistic' mental deformation, when it was thought that all that had to be done was to discover prophylaxis and erect barriers against

[9] Baldur von Schirach (1907-1974) was the leader of the Hitler Youth from 1933 until 1940, and then became Gauleiter of Vienna.

[10] A designation for a subset of the Germanic peoples.

crossbreeding and miscegenation, along with more eugenic measures, so that lost virtues would reappear, the idea being that, almost automatically, man would arise again as the creator of a higher culture. Today we see populations like the Norwegian, Swedish and Dutch that present a high degree of racial and even 'Nordic' purity, but within they are more or less lifeless, spiritually bastardised, and deprived of the virtues that characterised them in other epochs.

An essential point that cannot be overlooked in the present essay, but cannot be adequately developed either, is National Socialism's anti-Judaism and our judgment upon it. For Hitler, the Hebrew is the mortal enemy of the Aryan race, in particular of the German people. He is the bearer of a force that acts in a destructive sense, the subversive contaminator in the bosom of the cultures and societies within which he seeks, on the other hand, to assure himself power and influence. We should recognise that in Hitler anti-Semitism played the role of a true *idée fixe*, of which, in this almost paranoid aspect, it is not possible to completely explain its origins and which had tragic consequences. In his writings and speeches, Hitler over and over again attributes to the Jew the cause of every evil. He truly believed that the Jew was the only obstacle to the creation of an ideal German national society, and he made this obsession an essential ingredient in his propaganda. Apart from Marxism, for Hitler all Bolshevism has been the creation and tool of Judaism. The same holds true for Western 'capitalist plutocracy' and the Masons. These are all theses of which he should have recognised the one-sided character early on. We may wonder whether Hitler, in his 'fixation,' was not the victim of one of the tactics of what we have elsewhere called the 'occult war,' a tactic consistent with turning all our attention to concentrate on only one particular sector where the fighting forces are acting, while distracting our attention from other sectors where their activity can continue almost undisturbed. When I say this, we do not mean that there is no Jewish problem, on which we shall dwell in a moment. As Hitler professed it, however, displaying attitudes that had long been part of the so-called 'German Movement,'[11] anti-Semitism had the character of an obsessive fanaticism. It was the sign of a lack of inner control, and it is because of it that there is a stain that is difficult to remove from the Third Reich. The common error that racism and anti-Semitism are regarded by many people as synonyms also has its principal origin in Hitlerism.

[11] The term German Movement 'was used to describe the German portion of the Conservative Revolution,' according to Armin Mohler in Die Konservative Revolution in Deutschland, 1981-1933, pp. 12-18 (Der Begriff 'Deutsche Bewegung').

Hitler's attitudes created a kind of diabolical vicious circle. Since his ideas about Jews and the struggle against them had already been proclaimed in the party's first programme, it was bound to polarise against Germany — increasingly, the more Nazism gained ground — all of international Judaism, which *inter alia* controlled a good part of the large information agencies. In turn, this polarisation reinforced Hitler's ferocious anti-Semitism by furnishing him with a justification for his beliefs, and so on and so forth. In Germany, apart from the circles of the 'German Movement' we have mentioned, if there was no great sympathy for the Jews and they were often excluded from various organisations, the people in general did not harbour a violent aversion to them, as was the case in Poland and old Russia. (It is known that these countries distinguished themselves by massive and bloody persecutions with pogroms.) In the beginning of the Third Reich, anti-Semitism was restricted to boycotting Jewish businesses and the direction seemed to be heading toward a sort of apartheid. Since Jews were not considered members of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the German ethnic-national community, but only citizens of a non-Aryan race, almost like a foreign guest (for Hitler, Jews were not Germans of another religious confession, but a people apart), the goal was for Jews to live apart, have their own businesses, professions, schools, and so on, separated from Aryan society, and were to be prevented from carrying out an activity that was held to be parasitic, materialist, miserly and underhanded. The government left open the possibility that those Jews who did not like this policy should abandon the Reich, without taking with them all the property they had acquired, however. The truth was — a matter generally suppressed — that for a large number of other nations, they were also undesirable elements, and obtaining an entry visa was very difficult. For instance, there was the well-known tragedy of a steamship liner full of exiled German Jews that were stopped at the edge of American territorial waters and refused entry.[12] In the end, they sank the ship in despair. There was also another tragedy during the war of a large group of Hungarian Jews (or Jews who had taken refuge in Hungary) who could have escaped their tragic fate if, after encouraging negotiations with the leaders of the SS, the

[12] In May 1939, a German ocean liner, the MS St. Louis, set sail for Cuba with 937 passengers aboard, mostly German Jews who were hoping to find refuge there. Upon arrival, however, the Cuban government only allowed 22 of the non-Jewish passengers to debark, refusing entry to the remaining 915. The ship then set sail for Florida, but the passengers were refused entry there as well. Canada, likewise, did not accept them. The St. Louis then returned to Europe, and various European countries accepted the passengers as refugees. (The ship was not sunk by its passengers, contrary to Evola's belief.)

British government had not refused to receive them in Egypt.[13] In general, the ideal solution of the Jews' problem was seen as setting them free by assigning them a land. For instance, there was talk of Madagascar.[14] It is known today that the state of Israel, in accomplishing the goal of 'Zionism,' has not fulfilled this function. Those who still pose the Jewish problem today — in spite of the fact that the persecutions undergone by the Jews have made them 'taboo' — believe that the most dangerous Jews have no intention of confining themselves to Palestinian territory, and abandon their own positions in Western countries where they have rooted themselves and have very different possibilities and free hands.

Serious persecutions in the Third Reich began with reprisals that were organised in response to the 1938 assassination of a German diplomat from the embassy in Paris, vom Rath, by a Jew who wanted to make a political statement.[15] Aside from the devastations and excesses that resulted, it furnished the excuse for the promulgation of harsh anti-Jewish laws that had the backlash effect of exacerbating the campaign abroad against the Third Reich beyond all limits. Added to this spiral was a further spin that in part involved Fascist Italy as Germany's ally because, as we have said, this campaign was one of the causes that drove Mussolini to take rather moderate anti-

[13] This refers to Joel Brand (1906-1964), a Hungarian Jew and a Zionist who was active in attempts to evacuate the Hungarian Jews following Hungary's occupation by the Nazis on 19 March 1944. Brand met with Adolf Eichmann to discuss these plans, and Eichmann offered to exchange the evacuation of one million Jews to Turkey (not Egypt) in exchange for trucks and other supplies that he expected Brand to negotiate from the Allies. Brand was sent to Turkey and made contact with the British (who arrested him as an enemy agent). The British rejected the proposal, believing it to be an SS trick.

[14] The idea of resettling European Jews in Madagascar dates back to the nineteenth century in anti-Semitic circles. The Nazi leadership took up the idea in 1940, shortly after the conquest of France, since Madagascar was a French colony. This was seen as preferable to deporting the Jews en masse to Poland. The Madagascar Plan called for the use of the Royal Navy to transport the Jews there, since at the time it was expected that Britain would soon surrender to Germany. This never happened, however, and in 1942, the British captured the island.

[15] Ernst vom Rath (1909-1938) was shot in the German embassy in Paris on 7 November 1938 by Herschel Grynszpan, a German-Jewish refugee. While it was assumed that Grynszpan had done this in response to Germany's policies regarding the Jews, it was also rumoured that the two had been in a homosexual relationship, although this has never been proven. When vom Rath died of his wounds on 9 November, riots broke out in parts of Germany, leading to the destruction of many synagogues and Jewish-owned shops. Some Jews were killed or arrested. This came to be known as the Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass.

Semitic measures in retaliation.[16] The physical liquidation of Jews, however, has to be seen as taking place in the period of the war in the territories occupied by Germany, because estimates say that in Germany itself at the start of hostilities there remained only about 25,000 Jews.[17] For these massacres, about which the greater part of the German people learned only later, no justification or excuse can be accepted.

The Jewish question presents a social aspect and a cultural aspect. In the social aspect, it arose only in a relatively recent period, after the French Revolution and the emancipation of the Jews. Before, we could speak particularly of a religious anti-Semitism that had nothing to do with social and racial anti-Semitism. (For modern racists, a Jew who converts to Christianity remains Jewish and should be treated as a Jew.) Thus, for an orientation from the point of view of the Right, we cannot refer to the attitude of these earlier states in which loyalty, not ethnic origin, was most important. Prussia was rather liberal towards Jews. In England, Jews figured among conservatives, and the creation of the British Empire is due in part to a Jew, Disraeli.[18] In the Habsburg Empire too, Jews, while not enjoying sympathy, in reality had a great deal of freedom. The thesis of National Socialist anti-Semitism is that Jews took advantage of the free space accorded them to advance inordinately in the societies in which they lived. Anti-Semitism is defined as a reaction provoked by the fact that Jews, in tight solidarity, had succeeded in assuring themselves preeminence in different societies with positions in economic, professional and cultural life in numbers that stood in no relation to the numerical proportion of the Jewish group in respect to the complex 'Aryan' populations of the relevant countries. In Germany, for instance, in cities like Berlin, Frankfurt and Breslau, the percentage of Jewish lawyers and doctors seems to have reached 50%. At the University of Berlin, among the teachers on the law faculty there were 15 Jews and 29 non-Jews; in the medical school, there were 118 Jews and 147 non-Jews. Even elsewhere, for instance, in Vienna and Bucharest, matters were not very different. Jews enjoyed large percentages of representation and great influence in the fields of journalism and publishing. Finally, the presence of many Jewish elements among the leadership of German Marxism and

[16] In July 1938, under pressure from Germany, the Italian Fascists issued their 'Manifesto of Race,' which made anti-Semitism an official part of Fascist doctrine for the first time. The new laws were not well-received in Italy, however, even among some of the Fascist leadership.

[17] Today's historians generally provide higher estimates, often ranging between 160,000 and 245,000 Jews remaining in Germany at the outbreak of the Second World War.

[18] Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) was the Prime Minister of England in 1868 and again from 1874-1880, and expanded the British Empire.

Communism were undeniable. In addition, Metternich[19] had already noticed how Jews who had occupied important positions were 'first-rate revolutionaries' as 'writers, philosophers, poets, public speakers, publicists and bankers,' adding that they had probably prepared a 'baleful tomorrow' for Germany.

From the point of view of democratic liberalism, there was nothing to object to in all this and every limit, such as the principle of a proportional *numerus clausus*,[20] appeared absurd and negative. The rise, or the opposite, of the Jewish problem was linked (and is still linked) to the point of view of 'ethnic nationalism' and the presupposition that the Jew was an extraneous element in a given national stock. More generally, however, here we could pose the problem of the position to take before so-called 'integration' in the case not so much of Jews as of decidedly heterogeneous elements, as for example, Negroes. Objectively, it is then possible to wonder if, supposing a population has no sympathy for a given race because of specific physical and character traits, should 'integration,' in homage to democratic 'liberty,' impose a complete lack of any discrimination? This is the question that should be asked today in the United States.

Apart from the simple anti-Semitic impulse against the factual Jewish intrusion into foreign societies, and the population's corresponding and often instinctive reactions, and beyond the numeric proportions in key positions that are held to be unjust and invasive, as we have already discussed in *Fascism Viewed from the Right* (Chapter XI), it would be necessary, to be fair, to demonstrate that being a Jew gives a particular, undesirable stamp to the relevant activity. In some professional fields, such as for instance medicine and the natural sciences, this would be difficult to prove. In general, in all times Jewishness as a way of being, comportment and as a particular form of character has been recognised, and calling someone a Jew has never counted as praise. At a higher level, anti-Semitism focuses on influences that are viewed as negative in the cultural, ethical and political-cultural field — to mention only two names, one goes from Karl Marx to Sigmund Freud — and it is on this level that the polemic has taken place. It would then be necessary first of all to define Jewishness in general and spiritual terms (as a brilliant Jew, Otto Weininger, has

[19] Prince Klemens Wenzel von Metternich (1773-1859) was an Austrian statesman who was one of the most important European diplomats of the nineteenth century. He was involved in the negotiation of the Treaty of Paris in 1814, which marked the end of the Napoleonic Wars. At the Congress of Vienna in 1815, he was instrumental in establishing the new map of Europe, and the balance of power between the Great Powers which was to last, more or less intact, until the First World War.

[20] Latin: 'closed number,' meaning to limit the number of something.

correctly done),[21] emphasising certain aspects of character that alone should be of first importance, and which could indicate from what, appropriately, we must defend ourselves and what should be avoided. Research like this could be attempted. We have already indicated these elements in my book, *The Blood Myth*.[22] If an anti-Semite of conservative orientation of Kaiser Wilhelm's day, like Adolf Stoecker,[23] had to affirm to the Reichstag that the Jewish problem was an 'ethical problem,' basically he was indicating a similar reference point in order to pose the question adequately. On the other hand, a writer who was frequently cited in German 'national' circles, Paul de Lagarde,[24] had distinguished the Jew who was faithful to his own tradition, whom Lagarde respected to a certain degree, from the secularised modern Jew. In reality, when ethical motives were adopted, people meant the second. To the modern secular Jew was attributed a materialist view of life and a corresponding praxis, greed for money, an inclination to unscrupulous speculation (a serious outstanding sociologist who was free from ideologies, like Werner Sombart,[25] had already indicated the relationship between the Jewish spirit and the development of modern capitalism), rationalism and 'modernism' in their corrosive, anti-traditional aspects, the dishonesty of a double moral standard when dealing with non-Jews, as well as everything that can derive, even without a conscious intent, from his condition of being a 'rootless' man (and so related to a cosmopolitism and internationalism, believed to be lethal to the *Volk* and its values) and finally thirst for power (as 'overcompensation' for the inferiority complex created in him by the vile conditions imposed for centuries on the 'chosen people.')

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[21] Otto Weininger (1880-1903) was an Austrian Jewish philosopher who became a Christian, despised Judaism, and, because of his belief that he had failed to overcome the latter within himself, committed suicide. His primary work, Sex and Character, offers a theory of gender based on the idea that all individuals are composed of both male and female elements, with masculinity described as the genius' striving for absolute understanding, and femininity as obsession with sexuality and motherhood. References to Weininger abound in Evola's own work.

[22] Il Mito del Sangue (Milan, 1942), second edition, Chapter IX.

[23] Adolf Stoecker (1835-1909) was a Lutheran theologian who was the court chaplain of Kaiser Wilhelm II. In 1878 he established the Christian Social Party, and used it as a vehicle to combat what he saw as the growing power of socialists, Communists and Jews in Germany, calling for restrictions on the civil rights of Jews, as well as quotas on them, to be introduced.

[24] Paul de Lagarde (1827-1891) was a biblical scholar and orientalist at the University of Göttingen. He called for the removal of Jews from German society, as well as a new form of Christianity purged of Semitic influence.

[25] Werner Sombart (1863-1941) was a German economist and sociologist. Evola is referring to his work, The Jews and Modern Capitalism (London: T. F. Unwin, 1913).

More generally, National Socialist racism in its cultural campaign constantly used the terms *arteigen* (or *artgemäss*) and *artfremd*, that is, agreeing with or alien to the true nature (of the *Volk*). Concerning this, National Socialism lacked a precise and convincing definition, which anyhow was not easy to come up with. In fact, there is an entire assembly of aspects of modern culture and civilisation that is deleterious for every differentiated value and form. We need to remember that, if we can indicate the presence of Jews in various modern intellectual, ideological and artistic currents that incontestably entail subversion and denaturing, this activity would never have been possible, unless the terrain had been prepared for quite some time, not by Jews, but by 'Aryans,' and often in irreversible terms.

V

We should ascribe as a merit to National Socialism to have at least felt the need for a 'struggle for our worldview.' For Hitler himself, worldview was a factor of primary importance, superior to ideologies and party talking points. The revolution had to be extended to the field of worldview, *Weltanschauung*. In defining the worldview, however, there was no success in achieving anything solid and unitary. Naturally the myth of blood and the mystique of blood were essential parts of this *Weltanschauung*. In addition, however, there was no way to avoid confronting deeper problems. Granted the use of the term 'Aryan' and the importance attributed to the Nordic element, the issue arose of considering what could be defined, in a more general and serious way, as the Aryan or Nordic-Aryan view of life, with reference to the ethical, spiritual and religious plane. In reality, this was the only way to be able to give a concrete and positive content to the simplistic slogans of the racial campaign and have a fundamental basis for the formative action in which, apart from the obsessions of a purely biological and scientistic racism, we have recognised the more valid aspect of this orientation, when we were speaking of Fascism (*Fascism Viewed from the Right*, Chapter XI). Even if, as we have just said, all this had remained in large measure in the condition of a work-in-progress in the Third Reich, while there was no lack of confusion and deviations, National Socialism as a 'cultural revolution' had the courage to tackle problems in an area from which Fascist Italy held its distance. The reader will remember, for instance, what we have noted concerning the lack of clarification and an in-depth exploration of the content of that which is truly Roman as a worldview.

To take a specific example, we can especially point out National Socialism's stance concerning the religious problem. National Socialism was opposed to every kind of atheism. Atheism and the materialist conception of life were aspects of Marxism and Communism that were emphasised in the struggle against these subversive ideologies. This is why, at the beginning, many Christians and Catholics saw an ally in National Socialism. The very words of the SS oath invoke God, and Himmler could say, 'Whoever does not believe in God is presumptuous, megalomaniacal and stupid. He is not the man for us' (for the SS, that is — *ist*

überheblich, grösswahnsinnig, und dumm; er ist nicht für uns geeignet).[1] But Christianity's turn was bound to come. It was officially proclaimed, 'The Party defends the point of view of a positive Christianity.'[2] The official statement did not make clear, however, what was positive Christianity and negative Christianity. *Inter alia*, the problem was posed of the degree to which Christianity could call itself 'Aryan' or could avoid becoming the target of anti-Semitic polemic. Some people sought an escape route in 'aryanising' Christianity by excluding the Old Testament as a purely Hebraic matter and 'purifying' the New Testament as well from its 'Semitic dregs' and the theology of the 'Jew' Paul (while an Aryan and elevated character was frequently attributed to the Gospel of John). Naturally these were rationalisations and sophistries, which Christians could not accept, while the radical 'nationalist' ideologues (Rosenberg, Hauer, Reventlow,[3] the Ludendorff circle)[4] saw in it a compromise and affirmed the complete incompatibility of Christianity with an authentic Aryan, Nordic or German view of life or a 'Germanic faith.' Regarding this, there was also the first draft of a 'German Faith Movement,' the *Deutsche Glaubensbewegung*.

As for Hitler himself, no valid contributions to the problem of a worldview in a higher sense can be found in his writings and speeches. While his Wagnerian infatuation is significant — for him, as for Chamberlain, Richard Wagner counted as the 'prophet of Germanism' — so is his inability to recognise the degree to which, aside from the greatness of his Romantic art, Wagner must be held accountable for the distortion of many Germanic and Nordic traditions and sagas. If, in his writings and speeches, Hitler often mentions God and Providence, whose will he considered himself designated to fulfil, it is not easy to understand what the nature of this Providence could be, if, on the one hand, following Darwin rather more than Nietzsche, he recognised the right of the stronger as the supreme law of life, while, on the other hand, he excluded as superstition any sort of supernatural intervention or order and devoted himself to exalting modern science and the 'eternal laws of

[1] From a speech given on 2 September 1938.

[2] Point 24 of the 25-point programme issued in 1920.

[3] Ernst Graf zu Reventlow (1869-1943) was a former German naval officer who was active in the more Left-leaning elements of the nationalist movement in Weimar Germany, such as Gregor Strasser's wing of the NSDAP. He served as deputy chairman of the German Faith Movement from 1934 until 1936.

[4] Erich Ludendorff (1865-1937) was a former general who was a hero of the First World War, and became very active in nationalist circles after the war. He detested Christianity and became a worshipper of the ancient Germanic god, Wotan. He and his wife attempted to revive the old religion in Germany, classifying Christians along with Jews and Freemasons as enemies of the true German faith.

Nature.' This attitude was equally that of the movement's principal ideologue, Alfred Rosenberg, who went so far as to see in modern science 'a creation of the pure Aryan spirit,' without noticing that if technological conquests were due to modern science, so was the most destructive and irreversible spiritual devastations of the modern age, the desacralising of the universe. It is an openly illuminist and rationalist incomprehension for essential aspects of religion, paradoxically going *pari passu*[5] with the mystique of the blood, which we glimpse in Hitler and which is quite explicit in Rosenberg, for whom rites and sacraments were superstitions and creations of a non-Aryan spirit.

One can understand, therefore, in what shallows the struggle for the worldview ran aground in taking directions like this. The principal limit in this regard was that of a 'naturalism' that denied every true transcendence. Let it be enough to think that it condemned, as of a spirit that is not Aryan but rather 'Levantine,' the distinction between body and soul, since racism postulates and presupposes their indissoluble and substantial unity. Then there were those who drew from this denial the logical consequence by denying true immortality and conceiving of an 'immortality of the stock.' We see here how the slogans of a certain racial propaganda does violence to what clearly results from any serious investigation of the traditions of 'Aryan' (Indo-European) cultures, because these cultures recognised transcendence and made it the reference point for ethical virtues to which these National Socialist ideologues gave a value that was purely human and basically naturalistic. (See, for instance, the gloomy prospective of the so-called 'tragic heroism.') In these confusions, the ideas of the less satisfying parts of Nietzsche played a role, as in regard to the anti-ascetic prejudice (wherever they were not dealing with an 'immanent' ascesis, that is, self-discipline — as though apart from this there exists only a 'masochistic' ascesis based on mortifying the flesh). It will suffice to cite the absurdity formulated by a scholar (who in other respects is of indisputable quality), H. F. K. Günther,[6] about Buddhism: when the Indo-Europeans (the Aryans) conquered India, environmental and climatic conditions caused their energies, which were originally turned toward the affirmation of life, to reverse their polarity and become employed in denying life, 'which is suffering,' by means of ascesis.

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[5] Latin: 'on an equal footing.'

[6] Hans Friedrich Karl Günther (1891-1968) was a German racial theorist, eugenicist and Nordicist who authored many books. His work was admired by some in the Nazi leadership and he received several honours. Günther discusses Buddhism in his book, The Racial Elements of European History (London: Methuen, 1927).

A positive requirement in some National Socialist circles and those close to the movement could have been the study of origins and the return to origins. In this case, it would have been a question of Germanic and Nordic origins. But the mentality and the prejudices we have been discussing again prevented the achievement of anything really positive in the very field in which some apostles of Germanism had ventured early on. We shall mention some of these initiatives when we speak of the SS. In the context of the Party, however, matters went little beyond the exhumation of some ancient customs in an almost folkloristic way. Among the mass demonstrations, however, one that presented a certain spectacular and suggestive character was the ritual lighting of a fire and the movement of a swastika formed of squads of men carrying torches in the Berlin Stadium on the day of the summer solstice. The ancient Germanic signs, the 'runes,' were also exhumed as identifying marks of some organisations (the SS again). In the field of symbols, however, — a field with important connections to the traditional worldview — the aforementioned lack of comprehension for the dimension of transcendence constituted an insuperable handicap. Even with the runes, their ancient 'magical' aspect was ignored. What is more, in this field, namely, what concerns the proper comprehension and use of symbols of origins, we may wonder whether, starting with Hitler himself, there was a real understanding of the central symbol of National Socialism, the hooked cross or swastika. According to Hitler's own words, it stood as a symbol of 'Aryan man's mission of fighting for victory, for the triumph of the idea of creative (*sic*) work, which has always been anti-Semitic.'[7] This assumption is truly primitive and 'profane,' because it is hard to see in Aryan origins what the swastika could have to do with creative work' (!) and Judaism. In addition, this symbol does not figure only in areas of Aryan culture and, in second place, it was never explained why the hooked cross as a National Socialist sign was turned upside down, that is, marked by a movement of rotation in the opposite direction to the one that was prevalent in its use with a solar or 'polar' significance. We can reject the idea that in this choice they knew what some people have suggested, that is, that the reversed movement concerned the meaning of the sign as a symbol of power, while the movement in the normal direction would have been related to 'wisdom.'[8] When the hooked cross was chosen as the Party's symbol, Hitler and his associates had absolutely no clue of notions like these.

[7] Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, Book II, Chapter 7, 'The Struggle with the Red Front.'

[8] In reality, in the East the swastika has no set direction, and is used in both forms interchangeably. Indeed, the right-handed form that the Nazis adopted is the most common one.

[NOTE: We ought to treat as an idle fantasy what one person suggested, in the margin of a 'demonic' interpretation of Hitlerism, that is, that the reversed movement of the hooked cross was an involuntary but clear mark of his demonic character. It is equally idle speculation — we can affirm this because we know who said it and why — what someone after the war claimed about an 'occult,' initiatory or counter-initiatory background to National Socialism.[9] In 1918, a small group had already been created, the Thule Bund,[10] which chose for its symbols the swastika and the radiant solar disk, but, aside from Germanism, its spiritual level was more or less that of Anglo-Saxon theosophy. There were also other groups and authors, for example, Guido von List[11] and Lanz von Liebenfels[12] (they also created an 'Order') who anticipated Hitler's ideas and employed the swastika, but they did all this without roots or connections with a true tradition and with a mixture of personal idiosyncrasies of every sort.]

If Hitler's *Mein Kampf* counted as the political and ideological Bible of National Socialism, Alfred Rosenberg's *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*[13] was considered the principal work concerning the worldview of and the interpretation of history in the Third Reich. It was referred to in more than one respect for the indoctrination of new recruits. The book was essentially a compilation, to which, however, could not be denied certain qualities of synthesis and some valid interpretations. *Inter alia*, he

[9] Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier, The Morning of the Magicians (New York: Stein & Day, 1964). This is the book which first gave rise to many of the false myths which persist today about a supposed 'occult conspiracy' at the heart of National Socialism, and, although Evola himself is not mentioned, many of his other acquaintances are unjustly implicated in it. Even René Guénon is said to be consistent with Nazi ideology. Evola addressed the misinformation contained in this book in his essay, 'Hitler and the Secret Societies'.

[10] The Thule Society was a Völkisch occult order founded in Munich in 1917. It is notable in that the German Workers' Party, the predecessor to the NSDAP, was founded by members of the Thule Society. Hitler already severed the Party's links with the Society by 1920, however, and the Society itself dissolved during the 1920s.

[11] Guido von List (1848-1919) was a writer and the founder of a mystical Order, the Armanen, which was based on ideas of German paganism, Christianity and Theosophy.

[12] Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels (1874-1954) was a former Austrian monk who established the mystical Ordo Novi Templi (Order of New Templars) in 1907, based on ideas derived from Guido von List and other sources, and infused with Aryan racial ideology and anti-Semitism. Although many have claimed, including Lanz von Liebenfels himself, that Hitler was influenced by his ideas, Hitler banned him from publishing following the Anschluss in 1938.

[13] The Myth of the Twentieth Century (Torrance: Noontide Press, 1982).

used the research of H. Wirth[14] on Nordic-Atlantic prehistory and of J. J. Bachofen[15] on the morphology of ancient civilisations. But apart from the misunderstandings we have already mentioned and an anti-Catholicism that was worthy of the Illuminati,[16] quite a few botched aspects of the book offered arms to the enemy, and the situation only got worse as Rosenberg moved from the horizons of high Antiquity to modern times, because it became increasingly clear that he was exploiting the facts in a German and political direction. At any rate, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* counted as the principal work that, even if not in openly official terms, was recommended in Hitler's Third Reich in the struggle for a worldview.

[NOTE: C. Steding, *Das Reich und die Krankheit der europäischen Kultur*[17] is a less pretentious book but with different and more valid views and a superior conception of the state, drawn in part from Hegel, the 'philosopher of Prussianism.' Official Nazi circles took no notice of it and, on the contrary, wilfully ignored it.]

The different critical reservations we have had to make do not prevent us from recognising that something was happening in the Third Reich and new horizons were being courageously sought out in this area. The problem was that the various currents lacked adequate reference points, or were hindered by prejudices and distortions already before they got started. No one can say whether a different situation would have arisen if the Third Reich had enjoyed a longer and calmer life, through the work of elements that were better qualified and not tied to the current slogans, especially those that were primitively Germanic and racist. As to the accusation of 'paganism,'

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[14] Herman Wirth (1885-1981) was a Dutch German who believed that there was an ancient, worldwide Nordic culture which has been forgotten apart from some traces which remain encoded in ancient myths and symbols. He was briefly involved with the SS Ahnenerbe in the 1930s. None of his works have been translated, although Joscelyn Godwin has published two excellent articles on Wirth, 'Out of Arctica? Herman Wirth's Theory of Human Origins,' in Rûna 5 (1999); and 'Herman Wirth on Folksong,' in Tyr 2 (2004).

[15] Johann Jakob Bachofen (1815-1887) was a Swiss anthropologist who asserted in his book, Myth, Religion, and Mother Right (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), that lunar matriarchy was the primordial condition of human society, and that solar patriarchy emerged later in opposition to it. Evola hailed Bachofen as a traditionalist and discussed him frequently in his own writings, particularly in 'Matriarchy in J. J. Bachofen's Work'.

[16] Evola is referring to the Illuminati of Bavaria, a secret society which sought to overcome the influence of the Catholic Church in all aspects of German society, among other goals.

[17] Christoph Steding, Das Reich und die Krankheit der europäischen Kultur (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1938). This book was a bestseller in the Third Reich. Christoph Steding (1903-1938) was a German historian who was strongly influenced by Max Weber and Carl Schmitt.

made against some tendencies in this area, from our point of view it should be said that, in principle, a certain renewed challenging of some aspects of the Christian and Catholic conception of the sacred and its vision of life and its morality was not deplorable. Under certain conditions, it would even have been legitimate and fruitful. So as not to sink to a lower level, however, contesting the exclusive validity of Christianity would have required for its counterpart the recognition of the sacred and transcendent contents present in what is a non-Christian and pre-Christian legacy. Otherwise there was the danger that the non-Christian vision of life they were seeking to rediscover and recover would be 'pagan' in exactly that worse sense that Christian apologetics had narrowly attributed to everything that was not Christian in order to exalt the new faith. What in both circles was accepted as 'German religion' or 'German faith' had an obviously naturalistic and pantheistic basis that placed it at a rather low spiritual level.

VI

Let us proceed to consider some initiatives of the Third Reich that, from our point of view, are not lacking in interest and in which we can see influences and impulses linked in part to ideas of the 'Conservative Revolution.' We are dealing with everything (beyond the collectivising talking points of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the national and racial community, and the *Führerstaat*, or Führer state, with its totalitarian, populist and dictatorial basis) that was related to the concept or ideal of an *Ordensstaat*, that is, a state based on an Order (in tacit partial opposition to the formula of the party state, a state based on political parties).

In this, the tradition of Prussian origins was, in a certain way, recovered. It is in fact known that the first small cell of Prussianism was an Order, the Order of Teutonic Knights, which was invited to defend the frontier of the East in 1226 by the Polish duke, Conrad of Masovia. The territories conquered by them and given to them in fiefdom constituted a state based on that Order. Protected by the Holy See, to which it owed feudal loyalty, and the Holy Roman Empire, it included Prussia, Brandenburg and Pomerania, and from 1415 was ruled by the house of Hohenzollern. In 1524, with the Reformation, the state of the Order was 'secularised,' that is, emancipated from Rome. If the Order's confessional link disappeared then, it preserved its ethical basis, which was that of ascetics and warriors. On those terms, the tradition continued and gave form to the Prussian state in its most characteristic aspects. When Prussia was established as a kingdom in 1701, the Order of the Black Eagle was created, which was connected to the hereditary nobility and had for its motto the same as the original Order, the classic principle of justice: *suum cuique*, to each his own. It is not without interest in understanding the particular value placed on the 'Prussian' formation of character, especially for what concerned the corps of officials, that there was an explicit reference to a virile assumption of Stoicism[1] for self-control, discipline, firmness of mind and a sober and upright lifestyle. So, for

[1] Stoicism was a school of philosophy which originated in Classical Athens, although as a term it continues to be applied today to philosophies which share its general characteristics. Basically, the Stoics believed that it is human emotions which lead individuals into error, and that the only way to lead a truly virtuous life is to transcend the emotions. They also emphasised the importance of logic and reason as the sole paths to genuine knowledge.

instance, in the *Corpus Iuris Militaris*[2] introduced into the academies of the eighteenth century, the official was urged to study the works of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Cicero and Epictetus. Marcus Aurelius,[3] especially, was the preferred reading of Frederick the Great. Related to this was the fact that a certain antipathy was nourished for intellectualism and the world of letters. Here we may recall the sarcastic and radical attitude of Frederick William I, the 'soldier king,'[4] who wanted to make Berlin a 'Nordic Sparta.' Loyalty ('liberty in obedience') and the principle of service and honour characterised the political upper class that ruled the Prussian state, which was already a 'state of Order,' and gave it form and force.

[NOTE: By association of ideas, we can mention a certain aversion for the type of 'intellectual,' observable somewhat in Fascism, but to a rather higher degree in National Socialism. In fact, Italian Fascism respected intellectuals and men with a distinguished reputation in culture and encouraged them to make a formal act of adhesion to the regime without caring too much about what they really thought, while in National Socialism there was little regard for them and, if they wanted to, it let them emigrate without caring about how famous they were. (Goebbels was even supposed to have said the words, 'When I hear someone talking about intellectuals, I want to put my hand on my pistol.')[5] Still we should remember the part played in Germany by a heavy, erudite, agnostic *Kultur* and also a line of intellectuals of bourgeois extraction and of humanist-liberal formation. Averse to every mystique of the state and authority, they held the antithesis between culture and spirit for dogma, on the one hand, and power, politics and military or warrior virtue, on the other. However, in general, from the point of view of an aristocratic Right, it is legitimate to

[2] The Corpus Iuris Militaris was a text first published by the jurist and historian Johann Christian Lünig (1662-1740) in Leipzig in 1723, being a collection of the regulations of the German armies that had been part of the Holy Roman Empire.

[3] Marcus Aurelius (121-180) was Emperor of the Roman Empire from 160. His book, Meditations, is a classic of Stoicism, dealing with issues of service and duty for a leader.

[4] Frederick William I (1688-1740) was King of Prussia from 1713 until his death.

[5] This is an oft-quoted sentence that is variously attributed to Göring, Goebbels and other Nazi leaders. In fact, the line comes from a play written by Hanns Johst, a playwright who was a member of the NSDAP, which was performed in 1933 to celebrate the Nazis' rise to power. The play, Schlageter, was based on the life of Albert Leo Schlageter, a Freikorps soldier who was executed by the French in 1923 for conducting sabotage against their occupation of the Ruhr. The line occurs in a scene which depicts Schlageter and a friend studying for a school exam, when they begin debating whether studies are of use in a time when their country is in danger. His friend, dismissing their studies, exclaims, 'Whenever I hear about culture, I release the safety on my Browning!'

feel a certain distance in respect to these 'intellectuals' and 'men of culture' who, after the advent of the bourgeoisie and the crisis of the ancient regimes, presumed to be the true representatives of spiritual values.]

Perhaps it is appropriate to indicate the influence that, in a more recent period and during the Weimar Republic, was exercised in some circles by the so-called *Bundesgedanke*, the conception or ideal of the *Bund*, since it led to outlines of organisational forms. *Bund* means, in general, league or association, but in this specific case the expression had a content close to that of an Order, and was not unrelated to what in some ethnological and sociological scholarship has been called the *Männerbund*, that is, 'men's society.' The idea is that of an elite defined by an exclusively virile solidarity and a type of special chrism. In Germany, even before the development of National Socialism, different types of *Bund* arose, although of modest proportions, with various flourishes and an almost always exclusivist character. In cases in which the field of their interests interacted with the political field, they fought for an elite regime against mass regimes.

When these precursors are remembered, the idea that could have served as a corrective to Hitlerism was that the state should be based, not so much on a single party, as on something similar to an 'Order.' A fundamental task in the Third Reich was the creation of cadres trained by means of a systematic formation of an elite, conceived as the main 'bearer' of the idea of a new state and its corresponding worldview. The difference from the earlier, ancient tradition was that in Germany, in addition to qualities of character, physical requirements were taken into consideration, among them the 'race' factor, with special emphasis on the 'Nordic' type. There were two principal initiatives taken by the Third Reich in this direction.

The first initiative was the constitution, backed by the party, of three *Ordensburgen*, that is, three 'Order castles.' It was a question of complexes with edifices of an architecture that was inspired by the ancient Nordic-Germanic style, with large grounds annexed, including woods, fields and lakes, where, after an initial selection, young people were welcomed for a military, physical, moral and intellectual education including 'worldview.' Special attention was paid to courage and resolve with rather dangerous tests. Among other things, judicial proceedings were sometimes held in these castles with aspirants, or *Junker*, who followed the progress of the trial as an audience. Cases were chosen where honour and other ethical values played a role, to test the moral sensibility and natural faculties of judgment of the aspirants in the discussions that followed. Rosenberg supervised all the *Ordensburgen* and so his ideas served as the principal basis for the indoctrination,

which, given the reservations we expressed concerning them, introduced a problematic factor into the system. While the young men were in these institutions, they led a life of a 'society of single men,' almost isolated from the rest. When they left, they would be in possession of a special preferential qualification to hold political offices and obtain positions of responsibility in the Third Reich or, it is better to say, in what the Third Reich was supposed to become.

Of far greater importance was the initiative represented by the SS. In the aftermath of well-known post-war propaganda, as soon as there is talk of the SS most people today think only of the Gestapo, concentration camps and the role certain SS formations played in acts of repression and reprisal during the war, all of which is a rather crude and tendentious simplification. Since we are not dealing with contingencies, we shall not enter here into this subject. In this, as in every other case, we are interested only in the principles and the directive ideas to be considered independently from the historical results that some of their applications produced. So it is appropriate to cast light on some aspects of the SS that are generally (and purposely) ignored.

Originally, the SS initials stood for Saal-Schutz (Hall Protection), the name of a sort of bodyguard that Hitler used early on for his personal protection and to preserve order in the local committees. Then it was only a small group. Later, the two S's were instead intended to reference *Schutz-Staffel* (literally, protection echelon) and stylised in two zigzag lines which reproduced an ancient Nordic-Germanic sign, the 'runes of victory' and also the 'force-thunderbolt.' It developed into the formation of a real corps for the protection of the state — the so-called 'Black Corps,' distinct from the Brownshirts, the SA. Hitler and Göring used this corps in the repression of 30 June 1934 that, as we said, signified the elimination of the foolish desire of a radical 'second revolution' in the heart of the Party. Because of the role they played in this action, the SS were given a special status and special powers. They were considered the 'revolutionary guard of the National Socialist revolution.'

The true organiser of the SS was Heinrich Himmler, who was nominated *Reichsführer SS* or *Führer* of the Reich for the SS. Himmler was of Bavarian origin and had a Catholic education. When he was studying agriculture in 1919, he joined a corps of volunteers that fought the Communists. His political tendencies were philo-monarchist and Right-wing conservative, inherited from his father who had been the loyalist instructor of Heinrich, hereditary prince of

Bavaria.[6] He was especially fascinated by the ideal of the Order of Teutonic Knights, which we spoke of earlier. He wanted to make the SS a corps that would perform the same function of the state's central nucleus that the nobility had played with its unquestioning loyalty to the regime, but in a new form. For the formation of a man of the SS, he considered a blend of Spartan spirit and Prussian discipline. But he also had in view the order of Jesuits (Hitler jokingly used to call Himmler 'my Ignatius of Loyola'),[7] entailing a certain depersonalisation carried at times almost to inhuman extremes. Thus, for instance, whoever wanted to join the SS was told from the first day that, in his fidelity and absolute obedience, he had to be ready, if necessary, not even to spare his own brothers, that there were no excuses for a member of the SS, and that a promise is something absolute — to cite an example taken from a speech by Himmler, a member of the SS could be asked to stop smoking. If he did not promise to do it, he was rejected, but, if he promised and then as a member of the SS was caught smoking, 'all that remains is the pistol,' that is, suicide. Tests of physical daring were considered in the militarised units, for example, seeing if a soldier could remain calm while standing at attention and waiting for an explosive charge attached to his steel helmet to go off.[8]

A special aspect, however, was the racial clause. In addition to 'Aryan' blood (proof of Aryan ancestors from 1750 and onwards) and a healthy physical constitution, great importance was attached to a particularly tall type of the Nordid race. In addition, Himmler wanted his SS to be a *Sippenorden*, that is, an Order that, unlike the old knights, would have to correspond in the future to a stock, a blood, and a hereditary line (*Sippe*). Moreover, there was a notable limitation to the freedom allowed in the conjugal choices of men who served in the SS. He could not marry just any girl (not to mention girls of other races). The approval of an appointed racial official was necessary. If the decision was not accepted, there was no alternative: he had to leave the corps. Already upon his admission to the SS (after a period of testing), this clause was presented to the aspiring SS member. This racist biological

[6] Prince Heinrich of Bavaria (1884-1916) was also Heinrich Himmler's godfather. He joined the Bavarian army and was killed in battle in 1916.

[7] St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) was a Spanish knight who became a monk after being wounded in battle. He was the founder of the Society of Jesus, better known as the Jesuits, who became known for being fanatically dedicated in their missions.

[8] This is an oft-repeated legend about the SS, although no evidence exists suggesting that it actually took place.

reductionism was reaffirmed, together with a certain trivialising of the feminine ideal, which gave a special emphasis to the maternal aspect of woman.

While Hitler nursed an aversion for the descendants of the old German royal houses, Himmler had a weakness for them, and believed that the SS was the body of the Third Reich to which princes could suitably belong. In fact, various members of the nobility joined the SS. Prince Waldeck-Pyrmont enrolled as early as 1929.[9] Among the old nobility, among others, princes Mecklenburg, Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, Lippe-Biesterfeld, and others enrolled in 1933. Prince Philip of Assia was already Himmler's personal friend. The eventual rapprochement of this important organisation in the Third Reich with the German nobility was also expressed by the cordial relations the SS maintained with the Berlin Herrenklub ('Gentlemen's Club') and in the fact that Himmler delivered an address to the Deutsche Adelsgenossenschaft (Corporation of German Nobility).[10] The relations with the army, the Reichswehr, were more reserved, not so much for differences of orientation as for reasons of prestige, since militarised armed units were created in the SS and, finally, regular divisions that were to take the name of the Waffen-SS. Paul Hausser,[11] who had resigned from the army as a Lieutenant General to fight among the ranks of the 'Conservative Revolution' and Seldte's *Stahlhelm*, reorganized the SS academy in 1935 and was later superintendent of the school for SS cadets at Welfenschloss in Braunschweig.

As it developed, the SS had multiple articulations. In some of these, given their specific character, the aspects relevant to an 'Order' moved into the background, of course. Here we can ignore the SS of the 'death's head,' which had functions limited to those of the ordinary police and the state police. (Anyhow, by a decree of 17 June 1936, Himmler was named head of the police in the Ministry of the Interior.) This is the sector that was eventually responsible for certain negative aspects of the corps, which was used later to cover the entire SS in infamy. We shall only mention the so-called Verfügungstruppe SS, an armed force 'at disposition' that worked directly for

[9] Josias, Hereditary Prince of Waldeck and Pyrmont (1896-1967) was a veteran of the First World War. He joined the NSDAP in 1929 and the SS in 1930, eventually becoming a general in the Waffen-SS in 1944.

[10] Established in 1874, the Corporation was the largest organisation for noblemen in the German Empire. In the Third Reich, it adapted itself closely to Nazi ideology.

[11] Paul Hausser (1880-1972) who served in the German army during the First World War, and then the Reichswehr. Following his retirement in 1932, he became a member of the Stahlhelm. Following its absorption into the SA, he joined the SS, and become one of the most famous generals of the Waffen-SS.

the head of the Reich. Later, in July 1940, they developed into the Waffen-SS, which we have already mentioned, that is, an elite military unit, whose achievements (given the personal education demanded of an SS man) during the Second World War ought to have evoked the recognition and admiration of the enemy. We can also leave aside here the RuSHA section (the initials of the Rasse und Siedlungshauptamt),[12] which dealt with problems of race and internal colonisation. We are interested here in initiatives of a cultural order involving the SS.

Accomplishing Himmler's ideal encountered a sort of handicap in the fact that an order in the true sense presupposes a chrism, a spiritual basis, but in this case reference could not be made to Catholicism. In fact, the anti-Christian orientation that we have mentioned, namely the unacceptability of Christianity because of everything in it that was not Aryan and 'Germanic,' was rather prominent within the SS. Although there was a certain tension between Himmler and Rosenberg, on this issue their views undeniably converged. When Christianity and Catholicism were excluded, there arose again the problem of worldview in terms of what went beyond strict discipline and character training, and the SS aspired to be a *weltanschauliche Stosstruppe*, that is, a shock force in the field of *Weltanschauung*. Fairly early on, the SS had set up the SD, or 'Security Service' (Sicherheitsdienst), which originally was supposed to carry out activities involving culture and cultural control (according to Himmler's declaration of 1937).[13] If the SD developed in different directions, including counterespionage, its Seventh Office maintained its cultural character, and serious scholars and professors worked with the SD. In addition, sometimes it was possible to become an *ex officio*[14] member of the SS *ad honorem*[15] (*Ehrendienst*, or honorific service) in the case of those cultural personalities who were judged to have given a valid contribution in the right direction. We can cite, for instance, Professor Franz Altheim[16] of Halle University, a respected historian of Antiquity and the

[12] Race and Resettlement Main Office. Initially it only evaluated the racial backgrounds of volunteers for the SS, but during the war it also became involved in the resettlement of populations in the occupied territories in areas that were to be colonised by Germans.

[13] In January 1937, Himmler gave a speech in which detailed his intentions for the SS, including a broader vision of the SD.

[14] Latin: 'by right of office.'

[15] Latin: 'to the honour.'

[16] Franz Altheim (1898-1976) was a German historian with a strong interest in Classical Rome. Although at first he resisted National Socialism, by 1936 he realized that he would have to embrace Nazi views if he were to continue his work. As a result, he began working for the SS Ahnenerbe in 1937 (although he never joined the SS or the Nazi Party), and, with financial support from Heinrich Himmler, he went on

Roman world, and Professor O. Menghin[17] of the University of Vienna, an eminent student of prehistory. The Ahnenerbe was a special SS institute that had the task of carrying out research on the legacy of origins, the field of symbols and traditions, and even archaeology.

In fact, attention was directed toward what could be gathered from this legacy for the issue of worldview, and in this field the nationalist exclusivism of certain circles was put aside. Thus, for instance, Himmler gave financial support to the Dutchman Herman Wirth, the author of *Der Aufgang der Menschheit*,[18] a large work on Nordic-Atlantic origins. He also invited an Italian scholar who had carried out research in this field to give speeches in Germany on the world of tradition in general, while keeping his distance from Catholicism and Christianity, but likewise avoiding the distortions for which we have blamed Rosenberg and others.

[NOTE: It is deplorable that in the area of popular journalism, the SD allowed the publication of what was entitled *Das Schwarze Korps* ('The Black Corps'), a weekly full of coarse attacks against the Catholic clergy and a no less coarse and fanatic anti-Semitism.]

All this gives a picture of the SS rather different from and more complex than the one that is currently popular. If these particular initiatives remained at an early stage of development, having conceived of them at all still has a certain significance. In principle, particularly the ideal of an 'order state,' in its opposition to the mass totalitarian and dictatorial state and the state of political parties, must be given a positive evaluation from the point of view of the Right. We have already expressed our views on this point in criticising the Fascist one-party concept (*Fascism Viewed from the Right*, Chapter VI). In the specific case of Germany, everything would have depended on the degree to which it would have been possible to achieve an integration of the existing elements of the Right, while rectifying those aspects in

lengthy research trips in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. His stated purpose was to conduct research on the outskirts of the Roman Empire, but he also cultivated Nazi ties to the Rumanian Iron Guard, as well as to pro-German Arabs in Iraq and Syria, and wrote secret intelligence reports for Himmler. After the war, he resumed teaching in Berlin. He was the author of A History of Roman Religion (London: Methuen, 1938).

[17] Oswald Menghin (1888-1973) was an Austrian prehistorian who did research on the relationship between race and culture. A German nationalist, he worked with the Austrian branch of the NSDAP.

[18] Der Aufgang der Menschheit: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Religion, Symbolik und Schrift der atlantisch-nordischen Rasse (The Dawn of Humanity, Jena: Diederichs, 1934).

respect of which some exponents of the 'Conservative Revolution' and Prussianism have blamed the Third Reich for usurping and counterfeiting their various ideas.

The SS acquired an increasingly greater political importance, so much so that there were people who could speak of it as 'a state within the state,' or even of an 'SS state.' In fact, the SS had its own cadres in many key positions of the Reich — administration, the diplomatic corps, and so on. The concept of an Order implied, in fact, that men of the Order had been designated for these positions, as was earlier the case for the nobility.

Finally, we should mention the Waffen-SS. As we have said, after July 1940 SS forces, which originally and in peacetime had had the character of a 'force at disposition,' developed into military units with armoured divisions that, although they maintained a certain level of autonomy, fought alongside the Wehrmacht. From this Waffen-SS originated what could be called 'the first European army' toward the end of the Second World War. Himmler approved the idea, which was first formulated by Paul Hausser and then taken up by Gottlob Berger,[19] of recruiting divisions of the Waffen-SS with volunteers from all nations under the banner of the struggle against Communist Russia and in defence of Europe and its civilisation. This was the restoration of the function that the Order of Teutonic Knights had in the beginning as guardian of the East and, at the same time, of the spirit that had animated the *Freikorps*, the voluntary groups that, on their own initiative, had fought against the Bolsheviks in the eastern regions and the Baltic countries after the end of the First World War. In the end, more than seventeen nations were represented in the Waffen-SS, often with their own complete divisions: French, Belgians, Dutch, Scandinavians, Ukrainians, Spaniards, even Swiss, with a total of about 800,000 men, of whom only a part came from the Germanic area. The volunteers did not care that they would end up being considered as traitors and 'collaborators' for what they were doing, and after the war the survivors were often persecuted and put on trial in their respective countries.

[NOTE: The victorious Americans committed an unspeakable infamy when they handed over to the Soviet Union divisions of Ukrainian volunteers who had

[19] Gottlob Berger (1896-1975) was the Chief of Staff for the Waffen-SS after 1940. He was convicted of complicity in the genocide of the European Jews in 1949 and sentenced to ten years in prison. After his release, he worked for Nation Europa, a German-based journal that called for a new brand of pan-European nationalism, which Evola himself wrote for, and which also has featured many prominent authors on the Right and the European New Right.

surrendered to them only when all was lost, knowing perfectly well that they were sending the Ukrainians to the slaughterhouse.

We should note that in the training of the new units of the Waffen-SS, it was the military aspect that was almost exclusively stressed, and what was relevant to the ideals of an Order was often shelved. The commander of an armoured division of the Waffen-SS, General Steiner,[20] felt the need to claim after the war (in his book *Die Armee der Geächteten*)[21] that the Waffen-SS units stood on the same level as those of the Reichwehr and should have been treated only as such, and that they had had nothing to do with 'Himmler's romantic obsessions' (the General was speaking of Himmler's idea of the SS as an Order), concerning which General Steiner expressed himself in a rather antipathetic and presumptuous fashion.]

In a speech delivered at Poznan on 4 October 1943 Himmler spoke about the SS as of an armed Order that in the future, after the elimination of the Soviet Union, would have to stand guard for Europe against the 'Asiatic hordes' on the Urals. What is important here is that a certain change of perspectives had taken place at this juncture. The Aryan was no longer identified with the German. The plan was to fight, not for an expansionist National Socialism based on a unilateral racism and for 'Pan-Germanism,' but for a higher idea, for Europe and a European 'New Order.' This orientation was gaining ground in SS circles and found expression in the Charlottenburg declaration published by the SS Central Office toward the end of the war in response to the San Francisco declaration[22] made by the Allies concerning the goals of the war, the 'crusade for democracy.' The Charlottenburg declaration dealt with the Third Reich's conception of man and life, and especially the concept of the New Order, which was not to have a hegemonic character but a federalist and organic one.

We should remember, on the other hand, that to Himmler was due an attempt of salvage *in extremis*[23] (which Hitler considered an act of treason). Through Count

[20] Felix Steiner (1896-1966) was a veteran of both World Wars. After the First World War, he served in the Freikorps, and then returned to the Reichswehr, transferring to the Waffen-SS in 1935. He was regarded as one of the best officers of the Waffen-SS.

[21] Felix Steiner, Die Armee der Geächteten (Göttingen: Plesse Verlag, 1963).

[22] The United Nations Conference on International Organisation, which established the Charter for what would become the United Nations, took place in San Francisco in April 1945.

[23] Latin: 'at the point of death.'

Bernadotte,[24] he transmitted a proposal for a separate peace to the western Allies so as to continue the war against the Soviet Union and Communism alone. This proposal, if it had been accepted, could have assured Europe a different destiny by avoiding the 'Cold War' that followed and the Communist takeover of Europe beyond the 'Iron Curtain,' but it was completely rejected on the basis of a blind ideological radicalism, just as the same radicalism led to the rejection of the peace offer made by Hitler on his own initiative to England[25] on reasonable terms in a famous speech in the summer of 1940, when the Germans were winning.

[24] Folke Bernadotte (1895-1948), a Swedish Count, member of the royal family and diplomat who worked with the Red Cross during the war to bring home prisoners-of-war from Germany. Working with the United Nations after the war, he was sent to Jerusalem in 1948 to act as a mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict, where he was assassinated by the Zionist group Lehi (also known as the Stern Gang), organised in part by Yitzhak Shamir, the future Prime Minister of Israel.

[25] On 19 July 1940, Hitler gave a speech to the Reichstag to celebrate the recent German conquest of France. At the end of it, he appealed to the 'reason and common sense' of the English people, saying that he saw no reason for the war to continue.

VII

Leaving aside the SS and its last hour 'Europeanist' development, in this context we need to evaluate the ideology that was the foundation of the foreign policy of the Third Reich, and in particular of Hitler. We shall deal here with some of the essential causes of the Second World War and the prospects traced out in the case of a victorious ending for what concerned a European 'New Order.'

The most negative aspect of Hitlerism is represented by the fundamental and fatal part that the radicalism of an irredentist ethnic nationalism played in it. It was a true *idée fixe* for Hitler, and drove him into adventures that were at first successful but in the end led to catastrophe because of his lack of a sense of limits and realistic possibilities. All Germans had to be reunited at any price into a single Reich, the Third Reich, and under a single *Führer*. Hitler believed that this was literally a mission entrusted to him by Providence. The ideology of the *Volk*, which we discussed earlier while indicating its antecedents, here fused with the ideology of modern anti-traditional nationalism. It is anti-traditional especially in regard to Germany, because in neither the First nor the Second Reich do we encounter anything resembling such an infatuation. This was not the basis on which Prussia or Frederick the Great conducted their wars. We have already recalled that, together with the conservative party, Bismarck stood very far from any irredentist ethnic nationalism. He never posed the problem of the populations of German origin that were found outside the borders of the Reich, nor did he indulge in Pan-Germanic obsessions. (Next to him, von Moltke[1] had broad views of a decidedly 'European' orientation.) Hitler, on the other hand, systematically spread and fanned the fires of agitation among the so-called *Volksdeutsche*, the German minorities living outside the Reich (aside from the population of Austria), finally creating situations and problems that could only be resolved with violence. Otherwise, *inter alia*, Danzig would not have represented the crucial point from which stemmed the avalanche of the Second World War.[2]

[1] Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder (1800-1891) was chief of staff for the Prussian army, and is credited with modernising the force. He led the Prussian armies in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 and the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71.

[2] In 1938, Germany demanded that it be allowed to reincorporate Danzig into the Reich. Poland rejected the German demands. The disagreement over Danzig and certain other issues led to a German attack on Poland and to the outbreak of the Second World War on 1 September 1939.

As we have said, however, afterwards he did not stop with ethnic-nationalist integration, but advanced in a direction close to a hegemonic Pan-Germanism, which prejudiced in advance the idea of a 'New Order.' In fact, when the Reich extended its power over non-German areas, it asserted the supremacist idea and established a system of protectorates and satrapies with discriminatory practices that were bound to provoke reactions and nourish resistance, when it should have created the premises for the constitution of a superior unity that left a large margin for the independence of its parts. It is well known that, here and there, the arrogance of the *Herrenvolk*[3] showed its face. The expression ran the risk of passing from the aristocratic sense of a 'people of lords' to the hateful one of a 'people of masters,' to the advantage of an 'Aryanity' that turned the German element alone into a monopoly, and ended up ignoring it in the case of other stocks that considered themselves no less 'Aryan,' but which were often considered and treated as subhuman. This was already the case with the Poles, whose nation had a glorious, albeit unlucky, past. (Among other things, it was forgotten that it was a Polish duke who had summoned the Order of Teutonic Knights into those lands where Prussia was later fated to take form.) On account of his double infatuation, Hitler could not recognise an alternatively fruitful political line for Eastern Europe. Far more important than Danzig would have been playing on the atavistic anti-Russian sentiments of the Polish people in order to win them over as allies in his projected 'push to the East,' the *Drang nach Osten*.

In addition, there were the culpable mistakes committed by Nazi Germany in the Russian campaign and in the occupied Soviet territories, which were related to the conception of the 'living space' to be ensured to the German people to a degree that led to a kind of inter-European colonialism. (In our opinion, the task of a far-sighted policy of the Third Reich ought to have been that of seeking every possible means to obtain at least the neutrality of the western nations so as to have free hands for a devastating attack exclusively against the Soviet Union — but that would have required the shrewdness and genius of a Metternich.) If the slogan was the war against Communism and the liberation of Russia from Communism, there was, however, also the idea of expansion into occupied territories with the intention of simply conquering the native populations, in dealing with whom the German arrogance of seeing itself as the superior people often asserted itself.

[3] Usually translated as 'master race,' which was a term used by the Nazis for the Nordic race, which they held to be the purest branch of the Aryan race.

[NOTE: If we can believe the book published after the war by Picker with the title *Hitler's Table Talk*[4] — it consists of notes of opinions that the *Führer* is supposed to have expressed at dinner in conversation with his collaborators at General Headquarters during the period of German military success, and which were supposed to have also served as directives — Hitler is supposed to have thought about initiatives intended to systematically foment or maintain the state of cultural and even physical inferiority of populations, such as the Russians, in respect to groups of Germans that were to have colonised and exploited their lands.]

So it happened that, while at the very beginning the victorious Germans were welcomed with joy as liberators in different Russian areas, later the attitude of the populations was bound to change when, instead of the hoped-for liberty, the commissars of the National Socialist Party, military commanders, and unscrupulous exponents of the Reich's industry and trade took the place of the Soviet authorities and gave the impression that one oppression had been replaced by another. Free governments set up at the beginning by Russians in territories conquered by the Wehrmacht were dissolved, and even patriotic anti-Communists were persecuted. General Andrei Vlasov, creator of the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia,[5] was persecuted and even arrested before he was allowed to organise an anti-Soviet Ukrainian army to fight alongside the German Wehrmacht. All this was absolutely counterproductive and led to indifference and distrust in the populations, and nourished partisan movements. It also provided a useful ideological foundation for Stalin's politics, which, partly discarding its original Communist ideology, created a new Russian nationalism and coined the watchword of 'Soviet patriotism,' thus

[4] Hugh Trevor-Roper (ed.), Hitler's Table Talk, 1941-1944 (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1953). Henry Picker was one of those who transcribed the conversations.

[5] Andrei Vlasov (1901-1946) was a Soviet Red Army general who was captured by the Germans in 1942. He told his captors that he had always been opposed to Stalin. Shortly thereafter, the Wehrmacht contacted Vlasov about helping in the German war effort against Stalin, and he suggested that be given command of an army comprising recruits from among the millions of Soviet prisoners the Germans had taken. The Germans were at first reluctant, but by September 1944 the strategic situation had grown so desperate that the Germans allowed the creation of the Russian Liberation Army. Vlasov won recruits by convincing the captured soldiers that they would be deported to Siberia as traitors if Stalin won the war. Vlasov also headed the political arm of the liberation effort, the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia. The efforts came about too late to affect the outcome of the war, however. Although they surrendered to the Western allies, Vlasov and many of his men were repatriated to the Soviet Union and executed after the war.

mobilising very important moral forces that were perhaps decisive in the war against the Germans.

All this shows the problematic element that could have prejudiced the project of a 'New Order.' If, at the end of my essay on Fascism, we have indicated the undeniable advantages that, from a world perspective, the victory of the powers of the Axis and Japan would have had, one must, however, reject and resolutely condemn a system in which the tendencies we have just discussed were maintained. The ideal of a European New Order could have referred only to an organic, solidary and synergetic coordination of states and communities whose characteristic traits and independence were respected. This was also the thinking of those who formed the divisions that fought in Russia, as volunteers from many nations, as a real 'European army.' They were fighting not only against Russia, but also for this kind of Europe, not for an expansionist Pan-Germanism. What would have prejudiced every positive future development would have been precisely everything that corresponded to the properly Hitlerian component in the Third Reich, to be distinguished from the other components we have discussed. A process of rectification at the appropriate moment could have developed from representatives of these components, who had held important positions in the Third Reich.

To close, let us discuss the true internal and extra-legal opposition in the Third Reich. As we have already mentioned, it is frivolous to think that a regime utilising only terror and oppression could produce the unity that Germany demonstrated, the ensemble of achievements of which it was capable, and what made it a truly great world power after the collapse that followed the First World War and the Weimar Republic. His successes in the area of national reconstruction and foreign policy were Hitler's trump card, because the state of affairs had created a situation where it was impossible to be against National Socialism without being anti-German. For Germany, as for Italy, only by resorting to conscious falsification could anyone maintain that the crowds of that period did not almost unconditionally, and often fanatically, support their leaders, although we have indicated that the recourse to populism and 'mythology,' instead of having the prestige of a higher tradition, made that adhesion one that would dissolve, almost without leaving a trace, when the tension broke. This is exactly what happened in the two nations after 1945.

In the Third Reich, it is almost impossible to point out an internal opposition that deserves recognition from our point of view, not for what it denied, but for its positive counterpoint, the doctrine of the state. There are two exceptions. They are those elements of the Right that, beginning with the Reichswehr, although they

cooperated with the government, maintained a reserve and a distance and did not identify with National Socialism as an ideology, as well as the intellectuals identified with the 'Conservative Revolution' who withdrew from the scene. In this regard, there is no question of conspiracies before the one of 20 July 1944,[6] which was intended to eliminate Hitler physically, because the primary intent was practical. They were trying to spare Germany a worse fate, given that the military situation had become desperate. They acted in the supposition that without Hitler, and with a new non-Nazi regime, it would be possible to negotiate with the Allies on a better basis. Of course, they were fooling themselves. (For an analogous illusion, the treatment of Italy and the peace conditions imposed on it after Mussolini and his regime were removed show this.)[7] In addition, we should reject the thesis maintained by some scholars, for instance, the philo-Prussian historian, Hans-Joachim Schoeps,[8] that with the conspiracy and the assassination attempt of 20 July, there would have been a re-awakening of Prussianism, as though its exponents were to be found in at least equal numbers on the other side.

In the intellectual circles of the 'resistance,' like the so-called Kreisau Circle,[9] if there figured a von Moltke,[10] the Field Marshal's grandson, soaked in a drab spiritualism — he was even a follower of Christian Science — there were also Marxists and working class trade unionists, and others of a flaky 'Christian socialism.' At the time of the attempted assassination, if it had succeeded, there was no longer any idea of having Carl Goerdeler as Chancellor of the new government, a man with Rightist and even philo-monarchist tendencies, but Julius Leber, a former Socialist deputy. Leber, together with Adolf Reichwein,[11] had been charged with making contact with a clandestine Communist group in Berlin, an idea viewed favourably by

[6] On this date, a conspiracy of German military officers attempted to assassinate Hitler and overthrow the Nazi regime.

[7] The surrender terms granted wide powers to the occupying Allies.

[8] Hans-Joachim Schoeps (1909-1980) was a German-Jewish historian and philosopher of religion who was strongly attracted to the Conservative Revolution.

[9] The Kreisau Circle was a resistance movement against the Nazis, although it broke up in January 1944 following the arrest of its leader, Helmuth von Moltke, by the Gestapo.

[10] Helmuth von Moltke (1907-1945). He was executed in January 1945.

[11] Adolf Reichwein (1898-1944) was a First World War veteran and educator. He was to have become Minister of Culture, had the plot succeeded. He was executed in November 1944.

the would-be assassin, Colonel von Stauffenberg.[12] We are dealing, therefore, with an ideologically inconsistent, promiscuous and bogus 'resistance.' It had no unity or higher legitimacy. It was not by starting from this group that a Third Reich in the most authentic sense could have been established, as was foreseen before Hitler's rise by the circles we have previously discussed, by overcoming the specific negative aspects of the National Socialist system and its institutions.

With these reflections we can conclude these rather summary notes on yesterday's Germany. On account of the character of the material, we have had to give more room to the historical and documentary part than in our examination of Fascism. So, aside from the judgments we have occasionally pronounced on particular issues in the course of our exposition, the reader will have to proceed to a discrimination, and our intention — that may perhaps differentiate the present investigation, as succinct as it may be, from most studies on National Socialism — has been to highlight the multiplicity and even the heterogeneity of its components. If, from one point of view, Hitlerism was destructive to different aspects of earlier German traditions, on the other hand, in spite of everything, it restored and preserved, while trying to exploit or adapt them, other elements that should not be disowned today, just because they figured in the Third Reich and were often distorted by it.

This is not what post-war Germany did, not to speak of anti-fascist circles and foreign Leftists. Completely dominated by a democratic brainwashing first organised by the occupying powers, then obtusely continued and even perfected on their own account, the new Germany (the federal one — of the other, controlled by the Communists, there is no reason to speak) has neglected the principle, contained in a German expression, of not 'throwing the baby out with the bathwater.' It seems to have been unable to conceive a 'third way,' of the Right, far from both the totalitarianism of the National Socialist *Führer-Staat* and democracy and Marxism: a third way in which, when adequately rectified and restored to their origins, some of the ideas that acted in the preceding period could have been considered. If this had been the case, and if a global condemnation of the earlier experiences had not been proclaimed, a condemnation often more acrimonious than the one of which Fascism has been the object in Italy, namely a surrendering to a general revision of its entire

[12] Claus von Stauffenberg (1907-1944) was a Prussian aristocrat and Wehrmacht officer who led the assassination attempt against Hitler, placing the bomb personally. When it failed, he was immediately executed.

earlier history (the formula is *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*),[13] which is equivalent to an actual denial of history, present-day Germany, aside from its miraculously rapid recovery and its new material and economic prosperity, would not present, as it does today, an incredible ideological vacuum in its worldview, especially in what concerns the new generations. It would constitute a much more valid element in the creation of a European alternative to capitalism and Communism.

[13] German: 'dealing with the past.' The rebellious German youth of 1968 used this term to call for Germany to confront its Nazi past, including a review of Germany's history and its cultural traditions to account for those factors which allegedly led to the crimes of the Nazis.

A TRADITIONALIST CONFRONTS FASCISM

Foreword

The 1920s were a fast-changing and productive decade for young Julius Evola (1898–1974). He entered it as Italy's most brilliant member of the Dadaist movement in art and poetry. He then turned to developing a philosophy based on the idea of the Absolute Individual, a being whose freedom was so absolute that he could choose both horns of a logical or moral dilemma. Evola did not, however, become a modern, liberal 'individualist'. On the contrary, having faced the abyss into which modern art and modern life were heading, he became an exponent of the Integral Traditionalism of René Guénon (1886–1951). Liberal individualism often rejects tradition and the transcendent. Guénon argued that transcendence and the one Tradition that stands behind and above the many religious and historical traditions are fundamental for making sense of the world, by revealing the metaphysical source that lies behind material reality. Although Guénon emphasised the spiritual and religious sides of traditionalism, his views had political implications. The modern age seemed to him to exemplify the *kali-yuga*, the Dark Age of Hindu scripture, when the material and sensual overwhelm the spiritual and ascetic, eventually bringing about a universal collapse that gives rise to a new Golden Age. As in every Golden Age, society will be reordered according to the traditional hierarchy and its leaders will combine the traits of both priest and warrior. The Golden Age begins to degenerate when priests and warriors separate into two classes, as in, for instance, the Hindu *brahmin* (priest) and *kshatriya* (warrior). Leaders in the later stages belong to one class or the other. Evola, in his idea of the Absolute Individual, refused to choose between *brahmin* and *kshatriya*, or to acknowledge that the *brahmin* was superior to the *kshatriya*, as is taught in modern Hindu theology. He chose to be both guru and warrior, an ascetic who was also actively engaged with the modern world.

His first opportunity for engagement came from his friendship with Arturo Reghini (1878–1946). Reghini introduced Evola to Guénon's insights into the religious traditions of the East, but he was also intrigued with ancient Rome and its contrast with the modern world's democratic ideals and plutocratic nature. Given that Benito Mussolini's Fascist Party had recently come to power, Evola used his friendship with the Fascist ideologue, Giuseppe Bottai (1895–1959), with whom he had served in the World War, to publish a series of articles in Bottai's magazine, *Critica Fascista*, in 1926 and 1927 on the idea of 'pagan imperialism' as a

model for the new regime, which had taken the Roman fasces as its symbol. Evola praised the Roman Empire as a synthesis of the sacred and the regal, an aristocratic and hierarchical system under a true leader. He rejected the Catholic Church as a source of religion and morality independent of the state, despite its antiquity and long tradition, because he saw its universalistic claims as compatible with and tending toward liberal egalitarianism and humanitarianism, despite its anti-Communist rhetoric.

Evola's articles enjoyed a national *succès de scandale* and he expanded them into a book, *Imperialismo Pagano* (1928),[1] which provoked a heated debate involving many Fascist and Catholic intellectuals, including, significantly, Giovanni Battista Montini (1897–1978), who was to become the liberal Pope Paul VI. Meanwhile, Mussolini was negotiating with Pope Pius XI (1857–1939) for a reconciliation in which the Church would give its blessings to his regime in return for the protection of its property and official recognition as the religion of Italy. Italy had been united by the Piedmontese conquest of Papal Rome in 1870 and the Popes had never recognized the new government. So Evola could write in 1928, 'Every Italian and every Fascist should remember that the King of Italy is still considered a usurper by the Vatican.'[2] The signing of the Vatican Accords on 11 February 1929 ended that state of affairs as well as the debate. Both Reghini and Bottai turned against Evola.[3]

Evola's alienation from official Fascism continued until the fall of the regime, but it was not as complete as sometimes asserted. Evola certainly insisted on his intellectual and spiritual independence, but he was also on the lookout for connections with Fascism and other movements that were opposed to what he saw as the forces of modern degeneracy. He expressed his vision in the introduction to a short-lived magazine he published for a few months in 1930 (translated in this volume): 'Our journal, *La Torre* [The Tower], was not founded to produce articles in praise of Fascism and the honourable Mussolini. Neither Fascism nor the honourable Mussolini would know what to do with such praise. This journal was founded to defend *principles* that for us would remain absolutely the same whether we found ourselves in a Fascist regime or a Communist, anarchist, or republican one… *To the*

[1] Imperialismo Pagano (Rome: Atanór, 1928); English translation: Heathen Imperialism (Kemper, France: Thompkins & Cariou, 2007).

[2] Imperialismo Pagano, p. 40

[3] Richard Drake, 'Julius Evola, Radical Fascism, and the Lateran Accords', Catholic Historical Review 74 (1988), pp. 403–319; E Christian Kopff, 'Italian Fascism and the Roman Empire', Classical Bulletin 76 (2000), pp. 109–115.

extent that Fascism follows and defends these principles, so far we can consider ourselves Fascists. So far and no further.'

Evola developed close relations with German thinkers and writers who were part of that nation's Conservative Revolution.[4] His travels and talks in Germany, which continued even after the advent of the Third Reich, eventually attracted the attention of the SS, which issued an internal report on Evola. After summarizing three of his lectures, the report concluded, 'The ultimate and secret motivation for Evola's theories and plans must be sought in a revolt of the old aristocracy against today's world, which is totally alienated from the upper class. This confirms the initial German impression: that we are dealing with a "reactionary Roman"… His political plans for a Roman-Germanic Imperium are of a utopian character and moreover very apt to cause ideological confusions. Since Evola is also only tolerated and barely supported by Fascism, it is tactically not necessary to accommodate his tendencies from our side.' In a memo dated 8 August 1938 Himmler himself 'acknowledged the report regarding the lectures of Baron Evola and is in full agreement with the thoughts and recommendations stated in the last paragraph thereof', which recommended ignoring Evola and discouraging his influence in Germany.[5]

In the aftermath of the debate over 'pagan imperialism', Evola decided to go his own way and publish his own magazine to develop and present the principles of a true Right. In fact, ten issues of *La Torre* appeared in the first half of 1930, presenting a principled Integral Traditionalist perspective that was generally consistent with the principles of Fascism, but which also occasionally criticised aspects of the regime, as, for instance, the practice of terrorising political opponents using Fascist toughs banded together as *squadre d'azione* (action squads), popularly known as *gli squadristi* or 'Blackshirts'. Evola also mocked Fascist initiatives such as the 'demographic campaign' to increase Italian births, which he viewed as a classic case of modernity's privileging of quantity over quality. As he noted in his autobiography, *The Path of Cinnabar*,[6] in 1963, Evola began these critiques before developing the sort of political connections that would protect him not so much from

[4] Armin Mohler, Die konservative Revolution in Deutschland, 1918–1932 (Stuttgart: Vorwerk, 1950), revised in 1972, 1989, 1994, 1999, 2005; J T Hansen, 'Julius Evola und die deutsche konservative Revolution', Criticón 158 (1998), pp. 16–32.

[5] H T Hansen, 'Julius Evola's Political Endeavors', in Julius Evola, Men Among the Ruins (Rochester VT: Inner Traditions, 2002), pp. 62–63.

[6] Julius Evola, The Path of Cinnabar: An Intellectual Autobiography (London: Arktos, 2010); Italian: Il Cammino del Cinabro: Nuova edizione (Rome: Mediterranee, 2014).

polemical debate, which he sought, as from physical violence. Fascist toughs started to harass him and he assembled a bodyguard of like-minded young men to protect him. At the same time he worked to develop positive relationships with a few of the Fascist leaders. As the SS had reported to Heinrich Himmler, Evola was 'only tolerated' by official Fascism and regularly harassed by *gli squadristi*. The working relationships he developed showed his intelligence and daring.

In the early 1930s, when another man might yet have been reeling from the failure of his attempt to prevent the reconciliation of the Catholic Church and the Fascist state, and frightened by attacks by Fascist toughs, Evola found a way to win the support of two important Fascist leaders, Giovanni Preziosi (1881–1945) and Roberto Farinacci (1892–1945). His writings eventually attracted the attention of a third, Benito Mussolini. Both Preziosi and Farinacci followed an independent line and both spent time suffering the Duce's displeasure, but their ideological consistency brought them back into favour over time. Preziosi had served as the editor of a newspaper, *Il Mezzogiorno* [The South], in Naples from 1923 until 1929 before conflicts with Mussolini led to his resignation. For thirty years he edited *Vita Italiana* [Italian Life]. During its first two years, from January 1913 to December 1914, it was called *La Vita Italiana all'estero* [Italian Life Abroad] and was initially aimed at Italian immigrants in the United States. The rise of Italian nationalism during the War changed Preziosi's perspective and he dropped the reference to 'abroad' in the title. Over time the magazine assumed a certain cultural importance within Italy despite its restricted readership because the Duce allowed Preziosi to express his own views, which represented the position popularly known as 'clerical fascism'. From 1931 to 1943 Preziosi permitted Evola to write freely exploring traditionalist themes as long as he did not explicitly contradict Mussolini, whom Evola often mentions with approval. *Vita Italiana* published one of Evola's most controversial articles, 'Scientific Racism's Mistake' (translated in this volume). With the publication in two volumes of Evola's contributions to *Vita Italiana* we can see just how widespread and serious Evola's reading and outreach were during this period.[7]

Perhaps even more important and politically savvy was Evola's relations with Roberto Farinacci. Farinacci's political base was Cremona, where he was *Ras*, Etruscan for 'leader'. Mussolini's title, *Duce*, came from the Latin *Dux*. Fascist leaders like Farinacci and Italo Balbo wanted a title older than the Roman Empire and even the Roman Republic. Farinacci was identified with the 'action squads' and their

[7] Julius Evola, I testi di La Vita Italiana, 2 vols. (Padova: Libreria AR, 2006).

favourite prank, forcing castor oil down the throat of anti-fascists. The technique 'taught people a lesson' without killing them, and so set a rather different tone from the other, more murderous totalitarianisms. Eventually they went too far and in 1924, *squadristi* murdered the Socialist representative, Giacomo Matteotti. Farinacci was elected head of the Fascist Party from 1925–1926 and saved the government by cracking down on the squads. (He also defended the murderers in court, where three leading Fascists were convicted but later pardoned by the King.) He returned to Cremona in 1926, but remained active, fighting in the Ethiopian War in 1935, when he again held a seat on the Fascist Grand Council. In 1937 he fought in the Spanish Civil War. He was one of the stalwarts who refused to vote against Mussolini during the coup engineered by the King on 25 July 1943.

Farinacci was the right patron at the right time. It was hard to question Evola's fascist *bona fides* once he was allied with Farinacci, so *gli squadristi* left him alone. And Farinacci found the perfect post for Evola: editing the cultural 'op ed' page of Farinacci's newspaper, *Regime Fascista*, in Cremona. The newspaper had a reputation as the cutting edge of Fascist thought and policy, but Evola filled the cultural page with the leading intellectual lights of Integral Traditionalism and the German Conservative Revolution. Guénon published there, at first under a pseudonym, but later under his own name. '*La Torre*, purged of its more inflammatory *ad hominem* polemics, thus found a new, safe embodiment in the pages of one of the bastions of Fascist "orthodoxy".'[8] From 1934 to 1943, Farinacci gave Evola a free hand to make *Regime Fascista*'s cultural page a pan-European site for traditionalist ideas and authors.[9]

Evola's interaction with Mussolini stretched over many years. He led the charge against reconciliation with the Catholic Church, which was Mussolini's major domestic achievement. It permitted the integration of the Church and its institutions, including hospitals and schools, into the life of the Italian nation and laid the basis for the Church's political role after the Second World War through the Christian Democratic Party, which dominated Italian politics until 1994. The success of the reconciliation led most Fascists to avoid Evola and even, in some cases, to attack him, but there is good evidence that Mussolini was not angry at him.

A James Gregor believes that Mussolini was favourably disposed to Evola's provocations. 'In retrospect, it is clear that Mussolini allowed Evola to continue a

[8] The Path of Cinnabar, p. 112; Cammino, p. 201.

[9] Diorama: Problemi dello spirit nell'etica fascista. Antologia della pagina speciale di 'Regime Fascista' diretta da Julius Evola, 1934–35 (Rome: Europa, 1974).

diversionary controversy with the Church in order to drive the Papacy into the most accommodating arrangement he could. […] Faced by the apparent threat of a violent anticlerical "fascist" opposition, the Church concluded its negotiations with Mussolini. […] In part through this deft manipulation of Evola, Mussolini had won what was perhaps his greatest single political success.'[10]

This cynical view may be right, but in conversations with Yvon de Begnac, Mussolini spoke of Evola with respect.[11] For instance, he remarked about the *Pagan Imperialism* debate: 'Despite what is generally thought, I was not at all irritated by Doctor Julius Evola's pronouncements made a few months before the Conciliation on the modification of relations between the Holy See and Italy. Anyhow, Doctor Evola's attitude did not directly concern relations between Italy and the Holy See, but what seemed to him the long-term irreconcilability of the Roman tradition and the Catholic tradition. Since he identified Fascism with the Roman tradition, he had no choice but to reckon as its adversary any historical vision of a universalistic order.'[12]

Mussolini praised and encouraged Evola's writings on race, which became an issue after Italy's conquest of Ethiopia in 1936. Under the influence of Nazi Germany, Italy passed Racial Laws in 1938. Evola was already writing on racial views consistent with a traditional vision of mankind in opposition to the biological reductionism and materialism of Nazi racial thought. Guido Landra, editor of the journal, *La Difesa della Razza* (Defence of the Race), was especially irritated by Evola's 1942 article, 'Scientific Racism's Mistake'. Mussolini, however, had praised Evola's article on 'Race and Culture' (translated in this volume) before the Ethiopian War.[1] He approved the translation of Evola's *Sintesi di dottrina della razza* [Summary of Racial Doctrine] into German as *Grundrisse der Faschistischen Rassenlehre* [Compendium of Fascist Racial Doctrine] to represent the official Fascist position.[13]

Evola accepts the traditional division of man into body, soul, and spirit, and argues that there are races of all three. 'While in a "pure blood" horse or cat the biological element constitutes the central one, and therefore racial considerations can be legitimately restricted to it, this is certainly not the case with man, or at least any man worthy of the name… Therefore racial treatment of man cannot stop only at a

[10] A James Gregor, Mussolini's Intellectuals: Fascist Social and Political Thought (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 199.

[11] The relevant passages are collected in Evola, Cammino, pp. 292–296.

[12] Yvon de Begnac (Francesco Perfetti, ed.), Taccuini Mussoliniani (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1990), p. 647; Cammino, p. 296.

[13] Julius Evola, The Path of Cinnabar, p.166; Cammino, p. 300.

biological level.'[14] Just as the state creates the people and the nation, so spirit shapes the races of body and soul. Evola also wrote a history of racial thought, *Il mito del sangue: Genesi del razzismo* [The Blood Myth: The Genesis of Racism],[15] where he discusses the scientific racism of Gobineau, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Alfred Rosenberg, and Landra, and the tradition of valuing extra- or super-biological elements, whose adherents included Montaigne, Herder, Fichte, Gustave Le Bon, and his friend, Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss, a German biologist at the University of Berlin.[16]

The fall of Fascism in 1943 meant the end of the initiatives of Evola and Mussolini to develop a view of race which was distinctively Fascist and rejected biological reductionism. Scientific racists dismissed Evola as a rank amateur and the average Italian remembered only that he had written books on race and so was a 'racist'. Concerning Evola's relations with Mussolini, it may be worth noting that after Mussolini was removed from power in the coup of 25 July 1943, he was handed over to partisans and was rescued from them in a daring assault led by Otto Skorzeny on 12 September 1943. Evola was one of a small group of Italians present at Hitler's headquarters at Rastenburg when Mussolini was brought there. He was disappointed when the next day Mussolini proclaimed the Italian Social Republic, although he understood it was only natural for Mussolini to turn against monarchy in response to the King's betrayal. Evola also mentioned the influence of Hitler's open contempt for monarchy.[17] Since he disapproved of the socialist and populist ideology of the Italian Social Republic, Evola did not follow Mussolini to its capital, Saló, in northern Italy. 'Nevertheless, I could not avoid acknowledging the warrior and legionary value of those hundreds of thousands of Italians who had chosen to remain loyal to their allies and to continue the war…conscious of waging a lost war, yet eager to safeguard the honour of their country. This remains an almost unique event in the history of Italy since the Roman Empire.'[18]

Many Fascists spurned Evola, but a few valued him. As the articles translated in this volume show, he was open to individuals and movements that could provide the

[14] Sintesi di dottrina della razza (Milan: Hoepli, 1941), p. 35. In the German translation (Berlin: Runge, 1943), p. 90, the last sentence reads 'Fascist racial doctrine (die faschistischen Rassenlehre) therefore holds a purely biological view of race to be inadequate.'

[15] Il mito del sangue: Genesi del razzismo (Rome: Hoepli, 1937), revised 1942.

[16] Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss, Rasse und Seele: Eine Einführung in den Sinn der leiblichen Gestalt (Munich: Lehmann, 1926, 1937); Rasse und Charakter (Frankfort am Main: Moritz Diesterweg, 1938).

[17] Julius Evola, Fascism Viewed from the Right (London: Arktos, 2013), p. 56.

[18] Evola, The Path of Cinnabar, p. 182; Cammino, p. 328.

basis for opposition to modern degeneracy and the restoration of the Golden Age. Although clear on principles, he welcomed allies even when they did not share all his own commitments, as, for instance, with his admiration for Corneliu Codreanu, the head of the Romanian Iron Guard. Codreanu had a principled commitment to tradition, the legionary spirit, and asceticism, although he was also a Christian. Codreanu evaluated the different roles of the Right-wing movements of the thirties. Fascism represented the state and form, while Nazism was based on race and nation. He saw the Iron Guard as representing spirit. Evola asked him about the role of Christianity, which Evola rejected because of its universalism. Codreanu acknowledged Evola's reservations, but explained, 'We aim to bring back to life in the form of a national consciousness and a lived experience what in this religion has often been mummified and become the traditionalism of a somnolent clergy. […] The Iron Guard movement takes from our religion a fundamental idea, that of *ecumenicity*. This means the overcoming of every abstract and rationalistic internationalism and universalism. The ecumenical idea is that of *societas* as a unity of life, a living organism, living together not only with our people but also with our dead and with God. […] An important point is that for us the presence of the dead in the ecumenical nation is not abstract, but real. We cannot separate ourselves from the presence of our dead and especially our heroes. As forces liberated from the human condition they penetrate and sustain our highest life. The legionnaires meet periodically in little groups, called "nests". These meetings follow special rites. Every meeting begins with the call to all our fallen comrades and those present respond with "present!" For us this rite is not just a ceremony and allegory, but a real evocation.'

Evola refused to be discouraged by the murder of Codreanu, the fall of Mussolini, and the defeat of the Axis powers in the Second World War. The principles of a true Right remained true and valid. Even a crippling injury he suffered during an air raid in Vienna near the war's end did not stop him from meeting with young people and formulating key principles for them.

In 'Orientations,' Evola attempted to present to the post-war youth an alternative to the world they found themselves in, where the only options seemed to be the egalitarian levelling of the Communist world, the stifling consumerism represented by the United States, and the Catholic moralism of Christian Democracy. 'Orientations' remains the clearest short presentation of his principles. The Italian authorities obviously agreed, for he was soon charged with violating the recently passed laws on re-founding the Fascist Party. The police had arrested about thirty youngsters, who ranged from real but harmless rabble-rousers to more thoughtful

young men who edited a Right-wing journal called *Imperium* and had arranged for the publication of 'Orientations'. Evola was arrested and tried for 'defending Fascism', 'attempting to reconstitute the dissolved Fascist Party', and being the 'master' and 'inspirer' of young neo-Fascists. Like Socrates, he was accused of not worshipping the gods of democracy and of corrupting youth.

The trial was a public relations disaster for the new democracy. A respected if somewhat rambunctious monarchist lawyer, Francesco Carnelutti, defended him free of charge. He made a mockery of the hapless prosecutors. Evola delivered his own defence speech, which was soon published. He did not disguise the fact that he had not been a typical Fascist, or even a Fascist at all. He had never joined the Fascist Party, opposed the reconciliation with the Church, mocked Fascist initiatives like the demographic campaign, and even denounced *gli squadristi*. There had been social and even physical consequences, but the government had never brought formal charges against him. That, however, had been Fascism; this was democracy. As Evola told the jury, 'Some like to depict Fascism as a "sinister tyranny". During that "tyranny" I never had to undergo a situation like the present one.'

He asked the prosecutor, Dr. Sangiorgi, where in his published writings he had defended 'distinctively Fascist ideas'. Sangiorgi admitted that there were no such specific passages, but that the general spirit of his works promoted 'Fascist ideas', such as monocracy, hierarchism, aristocracy, or elitism. Evola responded, 'I should say that if such are the terms of the accusation, I would be honoured to see seated here next to me as defendants men such as Aristotle, Plato, the Dante of *De Monarchia*, and so on, up to Metternich and Bismarck.' At this point, Evola's lawyer Carnelutti shouted out, '*La polizia è andata in cerca anche di costoro!* ('The police have gone to look for them, too!')

Evola ignored this outburst and continued, 'In the same spirit as a Metternich, a Bismarck, or the great Catholic philosophers of the principle of authority, de Maistre and Donoso Cortés, I reject all that which derives, directly or indirectly, from the French Revolution and which, in my opinion, has as its extreme consequence Bolshevism; to which I oppose the "world of Tradition"… My principles are only those that, before the French Revolution, every well-born person considered healthy and normal.'

The jury found Evola 'innocent', a possible verdict in Roman Civil Law, which differs here from English Common Law, where the only possible verdicts are 'guilty' or 'not guilty'. The legal strategy was a good one: the Left is out to get a good conservative by calling him a Fascist. There is no reason to think the jury read

'Orientations'. If they had, they would probably have agreed that Evola's ideas are not distinctively Fascist. From the Leftist perspective they are worse. He describes the Axis as three great historic nations that had the courage to take up their traditions against the modern forces of economic reductionism, both Communist and capitalist. 'The great illusion of our days is that democracy and liberalism are the antithesis of Communism. […] This illusion is like saying that dusk is the antithesis of night. […] From the point of view of the idea that inspires them, Russia and North America can be considered as two tongs of the same pincers that are tightening definitively around Europe.' The true enemy is economic reductionism, or economism, which Evola calls 'hallucination or demonic possession'. The proper response to this enemy and the forces and nations that promote it is the legionary spirit, described by Evola as 'the attitude of one who knows how to choose the hardest path, to fight even when he knows that the battle is substantially lost, to confirm the words of the ancient saga, "Loyalty is stronger than fire!"' This is the ideal of Oswald Spengler's Roman soldier, who died at his post at Pompeii as the sky fell on him, because he had not been relieved.[19] Europeans do not need programs and marketing strategies, 'the skills of agitators and politicians', but men such as that. They should not worry about being on the wrong side of History. 'There is no such thing as History, this mysterious entity with a capital H. It is men, provided they are *really* men, who make and unmake history.'

Evola was not an influential figure in the Italy of the *Ventennio*, the Fascist 'Twenty Years', but his voice was heard. Today only academic experts can identify major players of the day like Giuseppe Bottai or Guido Landra. Evola's influence has grown with time. In 1951 the Italian democracy tried to send him to jail. During the years of student protest in the 1960s, Giorgio Almirante, veteran of the Italian Social Republic and President of the Italian Social Movement (MSI), called Evola 'our Marcuse, only better'. Today his works have been translated into German, French, and English, and re-edited with introductions and extensive annotation. He did what he thought was right and he wrote what he thought was true. His voice still challenges the modern world.

'The only thing that counts is this: today we find ourselves in the midst of a world in ruins. And the problem to pose is: do men still exist who are on their feet in the midst of these ruins? And what must they do, what can they still do?'

[19] Oswald Spengler, Man and Technics: A Contribution to a Philosophy of Life (London: Arktos, 2015), p. 77.

Evola's questions are still relevant. He speaks not to a globalist vision where each individual is an atomistic consumer, but to Codreanu's ecumenical ideal of *societas*. In Edmund Burke's words, 'Society is indeed a contract. […] It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born.'[20] The dead have a voice in our deliberations and no small one. As T S Eliot saw, 'The communication of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living.'[21] Julius Evola's words are tongued with fire. They give light and warmth to those still on their feet amidst the ruins.

[20] Edmund Burke, Revolutionary Writings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 100–101.

[21] T S Eliot, 'Little Gidding', in Complete Poems and Plays (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1971), p. 139.

ORIENTATIONS:
ELEVEN POINTS

(1950)

Point 1.

There is no point in indulging in wishful thinking with the illusions of any kind of optimism: today we find ourselves at the end of a cycle. Already for centuries, at first insensibly, then with the momentum of a landslide, multiple processes have destroyed every normal and legitimate human order in the West and falsified every higher conception of living, acting, knowing, and fighting. And the momentum of this fall, its velocity, its giddiness, has been called 'progress'. And we have raised hymns to 'progress' and deluded ourselves that this civilisation — a civilisation of matter and machines — was civilisation *par excellence*, the one for which the entire history of the world was preordained: until the final consequences of this entire process has been such as to cause some people at least to wake up.

It is well known where and under what symbols the forces for a possible resistance tried to organise. On one side, a nation that, since it had been unified, had known nothing but the mediocre climate of liberalism, democracy, and a constitutional monarchy, dared to assume the symbol of Rome as the basis for a new political conception and a new ideal of virility and dignity. Analogous forces awoke in the nation that in the Middle Ages had made the Roman symbol of *imperium*[1] its own in order to reaffirm the principle of authority and the primacy of those values that are rooted in the blood, race, and the deepest powers of a stock. And while in other European nations, groups were already orienting themselves in the same direction, a third force in Asia joined the ranks, the nation of the *samurai*, in which the adoption of the outer forms of modern civilisation had not prejudiced its fidelity to a warrior tradition centred upon the symbol of the solar empire of divine right.

No one claims that there was a very clear discrimination between the essential and the accessory in these currents, that in them the idea was confronted by people of high quality who understood it, or that various influences arising from the very forces that had to be combatted had been overcome. The process of ideological purification would have taken place at a later time, once some immediate and unavoidable political problems had been resolved. But even so it was clear that a marshalling of forces was taking shape, representing an open challenge to 'modern' civilisation: both to those democracies that are the heirs of the French Revolution,

[1] Imperium designated the authority of the Roman state to rule over its individual subjects.

and to the other one, which represents the extreme limit of the degradation of Western man: the collectivistic civilisation of the Fourth Estate,[2] the Communist civilisation of the faceless mass-man. Rhythms accelerated, and tensions increased until the opposing forces met in armed combat. What prevailed was the massive power of a coalition that did not draw back from the most hybridised of agreements and the most hypocritical ideological mobilisation in order to crush the world that was raising itself and intended to affirm its right. Whether or not our men were equal to the task, whether errors were committed in matters of timing, preparation, or the assessment of risks, let us leave that aside, because it does not prejudice the internal significance of the struggle that was fought. Equally, it does not interest us that today history is taking its revenge on the victors; that the democratic powers, after allying themselves with the forces of red subversion to conduct the war all the way to the senseless extremism of unconditional surrender and total destruction, today see their allies of yesterday turn on them as a danger much more frightening than the one they wanted to exorcise.

The only thing that counts is this: today we find ourselves in the midst of a world in ruins. The problem to pose is, do men on their feet still exist in the midst of these ruins? And what must they do, what can they still do?

Point 2.

Such a problem, in truth, goes far beyond yesterday's coalitions, because it is clear that both victors and defeated now find themselves on the same level, and the only result of the Second World War has been to reduce Europe to the object of extra-European powers and interests. We have to recognise that the devastation we have around us is primarily of a moral character. We are in a climate of general moral amnesia and of profound disorientation, despite all the accepted ways of speaking in common use in a society of consumers and democracy: the surrender of character and every true dignity, an ideological wasting away, the supremacy of the lowest interests, and living day by day, in general characterise post-war man. Recognising

[2] In Men Among the Ruins, Evola defines the Fourth Estate as being the last stage in the cyclical development of the social elite, beginning with the monarchy; in the final phase of history, he says, 'the fourth and last elite is that of the collectivist and revolutionary leaders of the Fourth Estate' (p. 164).

this means also recognising that the first problem, the foundation of every other one, is of an internal character: getting up on your feet, standing up inside, giving oneself a form, and creating in oneself an order and uprightness. People who delude themselves today about the possibility of a purely political struggle and about the power of one or another formula or system, who do not possess a new human quality as a precise opposing vision, have learned none of the lessons of the recent past. Here is a principle that ought to be absolutely clear today more than ever: if a state were to possess a political or social system that, in theory, would count as the most perfect one, but the human substance of which it is comprised were tainted, well then, that state would sooner or later descend to the level of the lowest societies, while a people, a race capable of producing real men, men of just feeling and secure instinct, would reach a high level of civilisation and would stay on its feet before the most calamitous tests even if its political system were faulty and imperfect. We should therefore take a firm stand against that false "political realism" that thinks only in terms of programmes, partisan political issues, and social and economic recipes. All this belongs to the contingent, not the essential. The measure of what can still be saved rather depends on the existence, or absence, of men who stand before us not to recite talking points, but to be models: not yielding to the demagogy or materialism of the masses, but to revive different forms of sensibilities and interests. Beginning with what can still survive among the ruins, and slowly to construct a new man to be animated by means of a determined spirit and an adequate vision of life, and fortified by means of an iron adherence to given principles — this is the real problem.

Point 3.

As spirit there exists something that can serve as an outline for the forces of resistance and revival: it is the *legionary spirit*. It is the attitude of one who knows how to choose the hardest life, to fight even when he knows that the battle is substantially lost, and to confirm the words of the ancient saga: 'Loyalty is stronger than fire.' Through him the traditional idea is affirmed. It is the sense of honour and shame — not half-hearted measures drawn from half-hearted morals — that creates a substantial difference, an existential difference between beings, almost as though between one race and another race.

On the other hand, there is the realisation that belongs to those in whom what was an end now appears as only a means. They recognise the illusory character of manifold myths, while leaving intact what they know how to follow *for themselves*, on the frontiers between life and death, beyond the world of the contingent.

These forms of spirit can be the foundation of a new unity. What is essential is to seize them, apply them, and extend them from wartime to peacetime, especially this peace that is only a moment of respite and a poorly controlled disorder — until distinctions and a new grouping are established. This has to happen in rather more essential terms than what might be called a 'party', which can only be a contingent instrument in view of given political struggles; in terms more essential even than a simple 'movement', if by 'movement' we understand only a phenomenon of masses and aggregation, a quantitative phenomenon more than a qualitative one, based more on emotional factors than on severe, clear adherence to an idea. What we are hoping for, rather, is a silent revolution, proceeding in the depths, in which the premises are created, first internally and in individuals, of that Order that will later have to affirm itself externally as well, supplanting suddenly, at the right moment, the forms and forces of a world of subversion. The 'style' that has to achieve prominence is that of one who holds his positions out of loyalty to himself and to an idea, in an intense absorption, in a rejection of every compromise, in a total commitment that must manifest itself not only in the political struggle, but also in every expression of existence: factories, laboratories, universities, the streets, and the very personal life of the affections. We need to reach the point where the type of which we speak, which must be the cellular substance of our group, is completely recognisable, unmistakable, and differentiated. Then we can say, 'He is one who acts like a man of the movement.'

This was the commitment of the forces which dreamed of a new order for Europe, but which was often frustrated and misled in realising it by manifold factors. Today that commitment must be taken up again. And today, the conditions are basically better, because the situation has become clearer. We only need to look around, from the public squares all the way to Parliament, to see that our vocations are being tested, and that we have clearly in front of us the measure of what we should not be. Before a world of mush, whose principles are, 'You have no choice', or else, 'We'll have time for morals after we take care of our stomach and our skin.' (I mean 'skin' in the sense of Curzio Malaparte's novel, *The Skin*!)[3] There is also, 'These are

[3] Curzio Malaparte (1898–1957) was an avant-garde Italian writer and journalist. Originally a Fascist supporter, he turned against Fascism after covering the war on the Eastern Front for the Italian newspapers. In his 1949 novel The Skin, the book's narrator says, 'Our skin, this confounded skin. You've

not times in which we can permit ourselves the luxury of having character.' Or last and least, 'I have a family.' When we hear these slogans, we know how to give a clear and firm response: 'As for us, we cannot act in any other way. This is our life, this is our essence.' Whatever positive achievements are accomplished today or tomorrow, it will not be by means of the skills of agitators and political operatives, but by the natural prestige and recognition of men both of yesterday and, even more, of the new generation, who are capable of so much and thus vouch for their idea.

Point 4.

Therefore there is a new substance that must make its way in a slow advance beyond the boxes, columns, and social positions of the past. We need to have a new figure before our eyes to measure our own force and our own vocation. It is important, or rather basic, to recognise that this figure has nothing to do with classes as economic categories and with the antagonisms related to them. This figure can present itself in the garb of rich as well as poor, of worker as well as aristocrat, of businessman as well as explorer, technician, theologian, farmer, and even a politician in the strict sense. But this new substance will know an internal differentiation, which will be complete when, again, there will be no doubts about the vocations and functions to follow and command; when a repristinated symbol of unshaken authority will reign at the centre of new hierarchical structures.

This formulation defines a direction that calls itself as much anti-bourgeois as anti-proletarian, a direction completely liberated from democratic contaminations and 'social' whims, because it leads to a world that is clear, virile, articulated, and made of men and men's guides. It has contempt for the bourgeois myth of 'security', and the petty life that is standardised, conformist, domesticated, and 'moralised'. Contempt for the anodyne fetter that is part and parcel of every collectivist and mechanical system and all the ideologies that attribute to confused 'social' values the primacy over those heroic and spiritual values with which the true man, the absolute person, ought to be defined for us in *every* area. Something essential will have been achieved when we revive the love for a style of active impersonality, through which what counts is

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no idea what a man will do, what deeds of heroism and infamy he can accomplish, to save his skin' (The Skin [New York: New York Review of Books, 2013]).

the work and not the individual. Through this, we become capable of not seeing ourselves as something important, since what is important is the function, the responsibility, the task accepted, and the end pursued. Where this spirit is achieved, many problems will be simplified, including problems of economic and social order, which would otherwise remain insoluble if confronted from outside, without the counterpart of a change of spiritual factors and without the elimination of ideological infections that from the beginning, already hinder every return to the normal; in fact, even the very perception of what normal means.

Point 5.

It is important not only for doctrinal orientation, but also in regard to the world of action, that the men of the new group precisely recognise the chain of causes and effects and the essential continuity of the current that has given life to the various political forms that are jousting today in the chaos of the parties. Liberalism, then democracy, then socialism, then radicalism, and finally Communism and Bolshevism, only appeared historically as steps taken by the same evil, as stages in which each one prepares the next in the complex unity of a process of decline. The beginning of this process is the point at which Western man shattered the fetters of tradition, rejected every superior symbol of authority and sovereignty, claimed a vain and illusory liberty for himself as an individual, and became an atom instead of a conscious part in the organic and hierarchical unity of a whole. In the end, the atom was bound to find that the mass of the other atoms, the other individuals, had turned against him, and he was dragged into the plight of the kingdom of quantity, of pure number, of masses that are given over completely to materialism and who have no other god than the sovereign economy. In this process there is no stopping halfway down the road. Without the French Revolution and liberalism, there would not have been constitutionalism and democracy; without democracy there would not have been socialism and demagogic nationalism; without the preparation of socialism there would not have been radicalism and, finally, Communism. The fact that today we see these different forms frequently together or in opposition should not prevent an eye that sees clearly from recognising that they belong together. They are linked, they condition one another in turn, and they express only the different steps of the same

current, the same subversion of every normal and legitimate social ordering. The great illusion of our days is that democracy and liberalism are the antithesis of Communism and have the power to stem the tide of the forces of the low, what is called the 'progressive' movement in the jargon of the labour unions. This illusion is like saying that dusk is the antithesis of night, that an illness's incipient stage is the antithesis of its acute and endemic stage, or that a diluted poison is the antithesis of the same poison in its pure and concentrated state. The men in the government of this 'liberated' Italy have learned nothing from the recent past, although its lessons are repeated everywhere monotonously. They continue their pitiful game with political conceptions that are out of date and empty in the parliamentary Mardi Gras, this *danse macabre* on a dormant volcano. What is in our possession is the courage of radicalism, the No spoken to political decadence in all its forms, both of the Left and of the supposed Right. And we must be especially aware of this: that there is no negotiating with subversion, and that concessions made today mean condemning ourselves to being completely overwhelmed tomorrow. We therefore insist on intransigence of the idea, and a readiness to advance with pure forces, when the right moment arrives.

Naturally this also implies ridding ourselves of ideological distortion, which unfortunately is widespread even in some of our young people. It is because of this that they concede some of the excuses for the destructions that have already taken place, deluding themselves with thinking that, after all, they were necessary and will serve the cause of 'progress': that we should be fighting for something 'new', awaiting us in a definite future, instead of for truths that we already possess. This is because, always and everywhere, although these truths appear in different forms, they have been the foundation for every correct type of social and political organisation. Young people need to reject these fads and whims. We should learn to laugh at people who call us 'on the wrong side of history' and 'reactionaries'. There is no such thing as History, this mysterious entity with a capital H. Men make and unmake history, provided they are *really* men. What is called the course of history is more or less the same thing as what is called 'progressivism' in Left-wing circles, and it aims at only one thing today: to foment passivity in the face of the current that is getting stronger and carries us continually lower. As to the charge of 'reactionary', ask them the following question: while you are acting, destroying, and profaning, do you then want us not to 'react', but to stand by passively watching, or maybe even shouting, 'Good work, keep it up!' We are not 'reactionaries' only because the word is not strong enough, and especially because *we* start from what is positive, and we represent what

is positive — values that are real and original, and we do not need the light of any 'sun of the future'.

In the face of our radicalism, in particular, the antithesis between red 'East' and democratic 'West' appears irrelevant. An eventual armed conflict between these two blocs appears to us even more tragically irrelevant. If we look only at the immediate future, the choice of the lesser evil is certainly a reality because the military victory of the 'East' would imply the immediate physical destruction of the last representatives of the resistance. But from the point of view of the idea that inspires them, Russia and North America can be considered as two tongs of the same pincers which are tightening inexorably around Europe. In them we see the same foreign and hostile force, acting in different but converging forms. The forms of standardisation, conformism, democratic levelling, frantic overproduction, the more or less arrogant and explicit cult of the expert ('brain trust'), and the petty materialism of Americanism can only clear the road for the final phase, which is represented in the same direction by the Communist ideal of the mass man. The distinctive trait of Americanism is that the attack on quality and personality is not accomplished by means of the brutal coercion of a Marxist dictatorship and the care of the state, but takes place almost spontaneously, by means of a civilisation that does not recognise ideals higher than wealth, consumption, profit, and unchecked economic growth — an exaggeration and *reductio ad absurdum* of what Europe herself has chosen. This is what the same motives have created there or are in the process of creating. On both sides we see the same primitivism, mechanical reductionism, and brutality. In a certain sense Americanism is for us more dangerous than Communism, because it is essentially a kind of Trojan horse. When the attack against those values of the European tradition which yet survive are found in the direct and naked form that belongs to the Bolshevik ideology and Stalinism, it still provokes some reactions and certain lines of resistance, even if weak ones, can be maintained. Things are different when the same evil acts in a subtler manner and the transformations take place insensibly on the level of custom and a general worldview, as is the case with Americanism. By thoughtlessly submitting to the influence of Americanism under the flag of democracy, Europe is already predisposed to the ultimate abdication, and this could come about without the need for a military catastrophe, but more or less the same point could be reached in a 'progressive' fashion after a final social crisis. Again, there is no stopping halfway down the slope. Americanism, willy-nilly, is working for its ostensible enemy: collectivism.

Point 6.

Our commitment to a radical reconstruction is directly relevant here because it insists there can be no dealings not only with every variety of Marxist and socialist ideology, but likewise with what in general can be called the *hallucination,* or the *demonic possession* by the economy. We are dealing here with the idea that in both the individual and collective life, the economic factor is the important, real, and decisive one; that the concentration of every value and interest upon the field of economics and production is not the unprecedented aberration of modern Western man, but on the contrary something normal; not something that is, possibly, an ugly necessity, but rather something that should be desired and exalted. Both capitalism and Marxism are trapped in this closed and dark circle. We need to break this circle wide open. As long as we talk about nothing else but economic classes, work, wages, and production; and as long as we delude ourselves that real human progress and the genuine elevation of the individual is conditioned by a particular system of distribution of wealth and goods, and therefore has to do with poverty and ease, with the state of prosperity *à la* the United States or with that of utopian socialism, we yet remain on the same level as that which we need to combat. We need to assert the following: that everything that relates to economy and the view of economic interest as a mere satisfaction of physical needs has had, has now, and always will have a subordinate role in a normal humanity. Beyond this sphere we need to separate an order of superior values which are political, spiritual, and heroic; an order that — as we already said — does not recognise, or even admit, 'proletarians' or 'capitalists'. It is only in terms of this order that it is proper to define the things for which it is worth living and dying, which establish a true hierarchy, which differentiate new ranks of dignity, and, at the top, place on the throne a superior function of command, an *Imperium*.

In light of this, we need to eradicate many weeds that have taken root here and there, sometimes even in our own field. What, after all, is this chatter regarding a 'state of labour',[4] of 'national socialism', of the 'humanism of work', and similar expressions? What are these more or less openly proclaimed appeals for an involution of politics into the economy, as if in a renewal of those problematic tendencies toward 'integral

[4] The Fascists sometimes referred to their regime as the 'state of labour', implying that it was primarily a workers' state. This became an even greater ideal in the post-Fascist Republic of Italy.

corporatism', that was basically headless, but which in Fascism fortunately found its way barred? Why do we see the slogan of 'socialisation' considered as a type of universal cure-all and the elevation of the 'social idea' to a symbol of a new civilisation that, who knows how, is supposed to be beyond 'East' and 'West'?

These slogans — we need to acknowledge it — are the dark sides present in quite a few minds that admittedly are in other respects found on our side. With this way of talking they think that they are being faithful to a 'revolutionary' commitment, while they are only obeying suggestions stronger than they are. A degraded political environment is full of them. Among these suggestions, the 'social question' re-enters. When will they finally realise the truth? Marxism did not arise because of the existence of a real social question, but the social question arises — in countless cases — only because Marxism exists, in other words artificially, or in terms that are almost always unsolvable, because of agitators, who are notorious for 'raising class consciousness'. Lenin expressed himself very clearly about them, when he refuted the spontaneous character of revolutionary proletarian movements.[5]

It is starting with this premise that we should act, above all, in the direction of ideological *de-proletarianisation*, by disinfecting those parts of the people which are still healthy of the socialist *virus*. Only then can one or another reform be studied and implemented without danger, according to true justice.

Thus, as a particular case, we can examine in what spirit the corporative[6] idea can again be one of the foundations of reconstruction. I mean corporatism not so much as the state's general system of composition, an almost bureaucratic system that maintains the deleterious idea of classes arrayed against one another, but rather as the demand that we must reconstruct within each business that unity and solidarity of differentiated forces which have been prejudiced and shattered, on the one hand, by capitalist prevarication (which has been followed by the parasitic type of the speculator and finance capitalist), and by Marxist agitation on the other. We must bring business into the form of an almost military unity, in which the spirit of responsibility, energy, and competence of the man who directs it will bring about the solidarity and loyalty of the working forces associated around him in a common enterprise. The only true task is, therefore, the *organic reconstruction of business*. To

[5] Lenin devotes the second chapter of his book What is to be Done? to a refutation of this notion.

[6] Present-day readers may be tempted to think of the term 'corporative' and 'corporation' as something relating to companies or business ventures. Evola, however, uses the term, as did the Fascists themselves, to describe a type of society in which its citizens are organised into groups based on the function they perform for the body of the entire society itself, such as agriculture, the military, or administration.

do this there is no need for slogans intended to be fawned upon or for low propagandistic and electoral ends, which represent the spirit of sedition of the lowest strata of the masses, a spirit which is disguised as 'social justice'. In general, we should restore the style of active impersonality, dignity, and solidarity in producing a style that belonged to the ancient corporations of artisans and professionals. We need to outlaw the trade union movement with its 'struggle' and its acts of real blackmail, of which we meet too many examples today. But, let us say again, we need to reach this point by starting from the inside. The important point is that against every form of *ressentiment*[7] and social antagonism everyone should recognise and love his own station, one that fits his own nature, also recognising in this way the limits within which he can develop his own possibilities and achieve his own perfection, because an artisan that acquits himself perfectly in his function is without doubt superior to a king that rejects and does not live up to his dignity.

In particular, we can allow a system of technical competences[8] and corporative representations to replace the partisan parliamentary system, but we should keep in mind that the technical hierarchies, on the whole, can signify only a step in the integral hierarchy. They concern the order of means, to be subordinated to the order of ends, to which alone corresponds the really political and spiritual part of the state. Speaking instead of a 'state of labour' or of production is the same as making a whole of the part, as clinging to what amounts to a human organism reduced to its merely physical and vital functions. Our standard can be neither such an obtuse and dark thing nor the 'social' idea. The true antithesis in front of 'East' as well as 'West' is not the 'social ideal'. It is instead the *integral hierarchical idea*. Confronted with that, no uncertainty is acceptable.

Point 7.

If the ideal of a virile and organic political unity was already an essential part of the world that was overwhelmed — and through it in Italy the Roman symbol was also

[7] Ressentiment, literally 'resentment' from French, suggests the endless repetition of the disgust that one feels towards a person or thing, resulting in a deep-seated aversion that becomes part of a person's essential nature.

[8] 'Competences' here refers to specialised areas of professional knowledge.

recalled — we should also recognise the cases in which such a demand took the wrong path and was nearly aborted in the mistaken direction of '*totalitarianism*'. This, again, is a point that must be seen clearly, so that the two sides are precisely distinguished and, also, so that we do not furnish arms to those who want to confuse matters for reasons we have seen. Hierarchy is not hierarchism. (The latter is an evil that unfortunately tries to spring up in a minor key every once in a while.) The organic conception has nothing to do with a state-worshipping sclerosis and a levelling centralisation. As for individuals, both individualism and collectivism are really overcome only when men stand in front of men, in the natural diversity of their being and their dignity. And as for the unity that ought to, in general, impede every form of dissociation and absolutising of the particular, the unity must be essentially spiritual and of a central orienting influence; an impulse that, depending on the realms, assumes very differentiated forms of expression. This is the true essence of the 'organic' conception, which is opposed to rigid and extrinsic relations appropriate to 'totalitarianism'. In this framework the demand for the dignity and liberty of the human person, which liberalism knows how to conceive only in terms that are individualistic, egalitarian, and privatised, can be realised integrally. It is in this spirit that the structures of a new political and social order must be studied, in solid and clear articulations.

But these kinds of structures need a centre, a highest point of reference. A new symbol of sovereignty and authority is necessary. The commitment, in this regard, must be precise. Ideological tergiversations cannot be permitted. It is important to say clearly that we are dealing here only secondarily with the so-called institutional problem. We are dealing especially with what is necessary for a specific *climate*, for the fluency that ought to animate every relationship of loyalty, dedication, service, and action with no thought of individual glory, so that we have really overcome the grey, mechanical, and devious aspect of the present political and social world. Given the situation today it will end in an impasse, since at the top it is not capable of any kind of asceticism of the pure idea. The clear perception of the right direction is compromised for many, either by some unfortunate antecedents of our national traditions or, and even more so, by the tragic accidents of yesterday. We can also recognise the inconclusiveness of the monarchical solution, since we can see those people who today only know how to defend the remnant of an idea, a symbol that has been gutted and castrated, like the constitutional parliamentary monarchy. But in an equally decisive fashion we ought to proclaim the incompatibility of our idea with the republican idea. To be anti-democratic, on one hand, and to defend the republican

idea 'ferociously' (this is unfortunately the terminology of some representatives of a false intransigence) on the other, is an absurdity that is almost palpable. By republic we mean modern republics. The ancient republics were aristocracies — as in Rome — or oligarchies, these latter often possessing the character of tyrannies. Modern republics belong essentially to the world that came into existence through Jacobinism and the anti-traditional and anti-hierarchical subversion of the nineteenth century. This kind of world, which is not ours, must be left behind. In terms of principle, a nation that is already monarchical and then becomes a republic can only be considered a 'downgraded' nation. In Italy we should not play a mistaken game in the name of loyalty to the Fascism of the Salò Republic,[9] because if, for that reason, we feel we ought to follow the false road of republicanism, we would at the same time be disloyal to something larger and better, and throw overboard the central nucleus of the ideology of the Twenty Years of Fascism, which is its doctrine of the state, in the function of authority, power, *imperium*.

This doctrine alone must be maintained, without agreeing to descend to a lower level or play any group's game. The concrete form of the symbol can for the present be left undecided. The essential task is to prepare in silence the suitable spiritual environment so that the symbol of a superior, untouchable authority may be felt and acquire its full significance once again, to which there cannot correspond the stature of any 'president' of a republic who can be voted out of office. Neither will the stature of a tribune or a people's leader be equal to the task, being the holder of a simple, formless individual power that is deprived of every higher chrism[10] and rests instead on the precarious prestige exercised by him over the irrational forces of the masses. It has been given the name 'Bonapartism'[11] and its significance is correctly recognised not as the antithesis of demagogic and 'popular' democracy, but instead as its logical conclusion: one of the dark apparitions of Spengler's 'decline of the West'.[12] This is a

[9] The Salò Republic, or more formally the Italian Social Republic, was the government of Fascist exiles which was set up in northern Italy, with German military support, following the occupation of the south by the Allies. Once Mussolini was instated as its head of state in September 1943, Mussolini returned to his socialist roots, and said that he had been prevented from realising the genuine Fascist revolution by political contingencies, and pledged to create a new Fascist state that was much more republican and socialist in nature.

[10] A type of anointing oil used in many branches of Christianity.

[11] Bonapartism refers to a circumstance where the ideals of a political revolution are co-opted by a dictator who uses it to further his own power aims, as Napoleon did with the French Revolution.

[12] This refers to the book The Decline of the West (New York: Knopf, 1926/28), in which Spengler theorised that all civilisations go through an inevitable cycle of ages of rise and decline in power, with

new touchstone for our side: a *sensibility* in respect to all this. Carlyle[13] has already talked of the 'Valet-World', who *has* to be governed by the Sham-Hero',[14] not a real Lord.

Point 8.

We must clarify another point in an analogous order of ideas. We are talking about the position to take in response to nationalism and the general idea of fatherland. This discussion is all the more relevant, because today many, trying to salvage what can be saved, would like to take up a sentimental and, at the same time, naturalistic conception of the nation. This notion is foreign to the highest European political tradition and is difficult to reconcile with the idea of the state that we have already discussed. Even leaving to one side the fact that we see the idea of fatherland invoked by the most divergent parties, even by representatives of red subversion, this conception is already in fact not relevant to the times, because, on one hand, we are witnessing the creation of large, supranational blocs, while, on the other, the necessity of finding a European reference point is increasingly apparent, a unifying one beyond the inevitable particularism inherent in the naturalistic idea of the nation and still more of 'nationalism'. Still, the question of principle is more essential. The political level *per se* is one of superior unities when compared to unities defined in naturalistic terms like those to which the general notions of nation, fatherland, and people correspond. On this superior level, what unites and what divides is the idea: an idea borne by a definite elite and tending to achieve concrete form in the state. For this Fascist doctrine — that in this aspect remained faithful to the best European political tradition — gave first place to idea and state as compared to nation and people, and understood that nation and people acquire a significance and a form, and participate

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the present age, which has been dominated by the West, currently entering its declining period. Spengler's thesis bears some similarity to traditional doctrines, but, as Spengler was a Nietzschean, he did not view his theoretical cycle as being the result of a transcendent, metaphysical reality.

[13] Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) was a Scottish writer who was extremely influential in the nineteenth century. His book, On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History (1841), portrays human history as being driven by extraordinary individuals.

[14] Thomas Carlyle, On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History (London: James Fraser, 1841), p. 350.

in a higher grade of existence, only within the state. It is precisely in periods of crisis, like the present, that it is necessary to hold firmly to this doctrine. Our true fatherland must be recognised in the idea. What counts is not coming from the same land or speaking the same language, but sharing the same idea. This is the foundation and the starting point. To the collectivistic unity of the nation — *des enfants de la patrie*[15] — such as has increasingly dominated ever since the Jacobin revolution,[16] we oppose something like an Order in every situation: men loyal to principles, witnesses of a higher authority and legitimacy that proceed precisely from the idea. As for practical goals, today we can hope to reach a new national solidarity, but to reach it we must not descend to compromises. The presupposition, without which every success would be illusory, is separating and forming a grouping defined by the idea — as political idea and vision of life. There is no other way, especially today. In the midst of ruins we must renew the process of originating; one that, in terms of elites and a symbol of sovereignty and authority, makes a people become one among the traditional great states, like forms rising out of the formless. Not understanding this realism of the idea means remaining on a level that is fundamentally sub-political, that of naturalism and sentimentalism, if not of downright chauvinistic rhetoric.

We must be especially attentive where there is a desire to use national traditions to support our idea, because a complete 'national history' of Masonic and anti-traditional inspiration exists that specialises in attributing the Italian national character to the most problematic aspects of our history, beginning with the revolt of the communes with the support of Guelphism.[17] This historical vision emphasises a tendentious 'Italian character', in which we cannot and do not wish to recognise

[15] French for 'the children of the Fatherland', the phrase occurs in the first line of La Marseillaise, the national anthem of France since the French Revolution.

[16] The Jacobin Club, a political group in eighteenth-century France, was one of the driving forces of the French Revolution.

[17] Guelph is a thirteenth-century term which was originally coined to name the supporters of the Pope, who were in conflict with the Ghibellines, who supported the imperial power of the Hohenstaufen throne against Papal authority. Evola saw this conflict as highlighting the distinction between priestly and royal authority in the state, since he believed the Ghibelline view to be the only valid one from a traditional perspective. He discusses this at length in Revolt Against the Modern World and The Mystery of the Grail. The communes were city-states which retained a degree of independence from their rulers in the Holy Roman Empire. In the 1240s, some of the communes sided with the Guelphs against the Emperor.

ourselves, and which we happily leave to those Italians who, with the 'Liberation' and the partisan movement,[18] have celebrated a 'second *Risorgimento*'.[19]

Idea, order, elite, state, men of the Order — we should maintain the battle lines in these terms, for as long as possible.

Point 9.

Something must be said regarding the problem of culture. Not too much, however. In fact, we do not overvalue culture. What we call 'worldview' is not based on books. It is rather an internal form that can be clearer in a person without a particular culture than in an 'intellectual' or a writer. We should attribute to the evil consequences of a 'free culture' that is within everyone's reach the fact that the individual is left open to influences of every sort, even when he is the sort of person who cannot be actively engaged with them or know how to discriminate and judge correctly.

This is not the right place to discuss this issue except to point out that, as things stand nowadays, there are specific currents against which today's youth ought to defend itself internally. We have talked first of a style of uprightness and self-possession. This style implies a just knowledge, and young people in particular should recognise the poison which has been given to an entire generation by the concordant varieties of a distorted and false vision of life that has affected their inner forces. In one form or another, these poisons continue to act in culture, science, sociology, and literature, like so many hotbeds of infection that must be identified and attacked. Apart from historical materialism and economism, of which we have already spoken, among the most important of these are Darwinism, psychoanalysis, and existentialism.

Against Darwinism we must reclaim the fundamental dignity of the human person by recognising its true place, which is not that of an individual, more or less evolved animal species among so many others, differentiated by 'natural selection' and always linked to bestial and primitivistic origins. Rather it is one which can be

[18] The Liberation refers to the end of Fascist rule, and the partisans were those who fought against the Fascists in northern Italy between 1943 and 1945, many of whom were of a Communist orientation.

[19] The Risorgimento ('resurgence') refers to the conquest and unification of the various states on the Italian peninsula by the House of Savoy, the rulers of Piedmont in northern Italy.

elevated virtually beyond the biological level. Even if there is less talk of Darwinism today, its substance remains. The biologistic Darwinian myth, in one variant or another, has the precise value of dogma, defended by the anathemas of 'science', in the materialism of both Marxist and American civilisation. Modern man has gotten used to this degraded conception, tranquilly recognising himself in it and finding it natural.

Against psychoanalysis we should oppose the ideal of an ego which does not abdicate, and which intends to remain conscious, autonomous, and sovereign in the face of the nocturnal and subterranean part of his soul and the demonic character of sexuality. This ego does not feel either 'repressed' or psychotically torn apart, but achieves an equilibrium of all his faculties ordered in accordance with a higher significance of living and acting. An obvious convergence can be noted: authority has been stripped from the conscious principle of the person and the subconscious, the irrational, the 'collective unconscious', and similar ideas from psychoanalysis and analogous schools have been given prominence in its place. In the individual, these correspond exactly to what in the modern social and historical world is represented by the crisis, the movement from below, subversion, the revolutionary substitution of the higher by the lower, and the contempt for every principle of authority present in the modern social and historical world. The same tendency is acting on two different levels and the two effects must end up becoming united in turn.

As for existentialism, even if we distinguish what is properly a philosophy — a confused philosophy — that up until yesterday remained relevant only to narrow circles of specialists, it is necessary to recognise in it the spiritual state of a crisis that has become systematised and fawned upon, being the truth of a shattered and contradictory human type which experiences a liberty by which it does not feel elevated as anguish, tragic fate, and absurdity. Such people feel rather condemned without escape and responsibility to this end in the midst of a world stripped of value and meaning. All this, when the best of Nietzsche had already indicated a way to rediscover a sense of existence and to give oneself a law and a value untouchable even in the face of a radical nihilism, under the banner of a *positive* existentialism, according to his own expression: that of a 'noble nature'.

Such are the lines of overcoming, which should not be intellectualistic, but lived and realised in their direct significance for the inner life and its own conduct. Getting back on our feet is not possible as long as we remain in any way under the influence of similar forms of a false and twisted way of thinking. Only when you have freed yourself from dependence on drugs can you attain clarity, uprightness, and force.

Point 10.

In the zone that stands between culture and custom it will be a good idea to explain the proper attitude more clearly. From Communism was launched the standing order of the anti-bourgeois attitude that has also been picked up by the field of culture in certain 'committed' intellectual environments. This is a point which we need to see very clearly. Just as bourgeois society is something intermediate, so there are two possible ways to overcome the bourgeoisie, to say No to the bourgeois type, bourgeois civilisation, and the bourgeois spirit and its values. One possibility corresponds to the direction that leads on to the lowest point of all this, towards a collectivistic and materialised humanity with its 'realism' in the Marxist style: social and proletarian values against 'bourgeois and capitalist decadence'. The other possibility is the direction that combats the bourgeoisie in order to effectively raise oneself beyond it. The men of the new grouping will be, yes, anti-bourgeois, but by means of the aforementioned superior, heroic, and aristocratic conception of existence. They will be anti-bourgeois because they despise the easy life; anti-bourgeois because they will follow not those who promise material advantages, but those who demand all of themselves; anti-bourgeois, finally, because they are not preoccupied with security but love an essential union between life and risk, on all levels, making their own the inexorable character of the naked idea and the precise action. Yet another aspect by which the new man, the basic cell for the movement of reawakening, will be anti-bourgeois and will differentiate himself from the previous generation, is by his intolerance for every form of rhetoric and false idealism, for all those big words that are written with capital letters; for everything that is only gesture, phrase, effect, and scenery. The essential, on the other hand, is a new realism in measuring oneself exactly by the problems that will face us, and in acting so that what counts is not appearance, but being; not gossiping, but accomplishing, in a silent and exact manner, in harmony with related forces and adhering to the command that comes from above.

Whoever knows how to react against the forces of the Left only in the name of idols, the lifestyle, and the mediocre, conformist morality of the bourgeois world, has already lost the battle beforehand. This is not the case for the man who stands on his feet, having already passed through the purifying fire of outer and inner destruction. Just as this man politically is not the instrument of a bourgeois pseudo-reaction, so, in general, he restores forces and ideals older than and superior to the bourgeois

world and the economic era. With these forces and ideals he creates the lines of defence and consolidates the positions from whence, at the right moment, the action of reconstruction will blaze forth.

In regard to this, we also intend to restore a commitment that was not achieved, because we know that there was an anti-bourgeois tendency during the Fascist period that wanted to express itself in a similar direction. Unfortunately, here too the human substance was not equal to the task, and it was possible to make rhetoric even from the steadfast rejection of rhetoric.

Point 11.

Let us briefly consider a last point: relations with the dominant religion. For us, the secular state, in whatever form, belongs to the past. In particular, we oppose that travesty that has become known in certain circles as the 'ethical state',[20] the product of a broken-winded, spurious, empty 'Idealist' philosophy that attached itself to Fascism,[21] but by its nature was able to give equal support, by the simple device of a 'dialectical' game of dice, to Croce's[22] anti-Fascism.

But if we oppose similar ideologies and the secular state, for us a clerical and clericalising state is equally unacceptable. A religious factor is necessary as a background for a truly heroic conception of life, such as must be essential for our group. It is necessary to feel the evidence in ourselves that beyond this earthly life there is a higher life, because only someone who feels this way possesses a force that cannot be broken or overwhelmed. Only this kind of person will be capable of an

[20] The Fascist state made attempts to instil morality in the Italians, particularly in the area of sexual mores; in Fascism Viewed from the Right, Evola condemns such efforts as belonging to 'little morality' and of being bourgeois in character.

[21] Evola is referring to Giovanni Gentile (1875–1944), who was Italy's leading philosopher in the Idealist tradition. He was among the most important theoreticians and intellectual spokesmen of Fascism. His ideas contributed to the idea of the 'ethical state'. Idealism comprises many different schools of thought, but its basic premise is that reality as we perceive it is concocted in our minds, and is a product of thought, rather than something that is objectively real.

[22] Benedetto Croce (1866–1952) was a highly influential Italian art critic, senator, and a philosopher in the German Idealist tradition. He initially supported Italian Fascism, but by 1925 he had become an opponent of the regime.

absolute leap. When this feeling is lacking, challenging death and placing no value on his own life is possible only in sporadic moments of exaltation and in an unleashing of irrational forces; nor is there a discipline that can justify itself with a higher and autonomous significance in such an individual. But this spirituality, which ought to be alive among our people, does not need the obligatory dogmatic formulations of a given religious confession. The lifestyle that must be led is not that of Catholic moralism, which aims at little more than a domestication of the human animal based on virtue. Politically, this spirituality can only nourish diffidence before everything that is an integral part of the Christian conception, like humanitarianism, equality, the principle of love, and forgiveness, instead of honour and justice. Certainly, if Catholicism were capable of making a capacity for high asceticism its own, and precisely on that basis to make of the faith the soul of an armed bloc of forces, almost like a resumption of the spirit of the best aspects of the Middle Ages of the Crusades — almost a new order of Templars that will be compact and inexorable against the currents of chaos, surrender, subversion, and the practical materialism of the modern world — in a case like this, and even if at minimum it held firm to the positions of the *Syllabus*,[23] we would choose it without hesitation. But as things stand — given, that is, the mediocre and essentially bourgeois and parochial level to which practically everything that is confessional religion has descended, and given its surrender to modernism and the growing opening of the post-conciliar Church of '*aggiornamento*'[24] to the Left — for our men the mere reference to spirit can suffice, precisely as evidence of a transcendent reality. We must invoke it to inoculate into our force another force, to feel in advance that our struggle is not only a political struggle, and to attract an invisible consecration upon a new world of men and leaders of men.

* * *

These are a few essential guidelines for the battle we have to fight, directed especially to young people, so that they may grasp the torch and the commitment from those who have not fallen, learning from the errors of the past and knowing well

[23] The Syllabus Errorum, or Syllabus of Errors, was issued by Pope Pius IX in 1864, and was primarily an attack on modernist and liberal social trends.

[24] Meaning 'bringing up to date', the term was used by those who felt that the Vatican needed to update its ideas in keeping with modern trends, and was a crucial term used during the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s.

how to distinguish and revise everything that was effected by and is still effected today by contingent situations. It is essential not to sink to the level of our adversaries, not to be reduced to manipulating simplistic slogans, and not to insist excessively on the past, which, even if worthy of being remembered, does not have the contemporary and impersonal value of the force-idea.[25] It is likewise mandatory not to yield to suggestions of a false politicising realism, which is the weak point of every 'party'. And, yes, our forces must also act in the hand-to-hand political struggle in order to create room for us to manoeuvre in the present situation and to limit the assault, otherwise unopposed, of the forces of the Left. But beyond that it is important, indeed essential to form an elite that can define an idea with intellectual rigor and intellectual intransigence in rapt intensity. We must unite around this idea and affirm it, especially in the form of the new man, the man of the resistance, the man who stands upright among the ruins. If it is granted to go beyond this period of crisis and unsteady and illusory order, the future will look to this man alone. The destiny that the modern world has created for itself is now overwhelming it. Even if it is not fated to be contained, if we stand by these premises, our inner state will be maintained. Whatever happens, what can be done will be done, and we shall belong to that fatherland that no enemy will be able to occupy or destroy.

[25] Evola borrowed this concept from Georges Sorel, who used the term 'force-idea' to describe ideas, akin to myths, which could be used to motivate the masses.

ARTICLES ON ITALIAN FASCISM AND THE RIGHT IN OTHER LANDS

(1930-1942)

Identity Card

(1930)

It seems as though no one is allowed to circulate through the streets and public squares of the republic of letters nowadays without a regular 'identity card'. It does no good to declare yourself a foreigner or an 'outsider'. Passports do not seem to be permitted. You must be 'naturalised' and explicitly reject your own political views to fit the current measures. This, at least, is the decree of the prefects of the republic, presided over at no charge by the journalists who head the cultural pages.

This one time, let us satisfy these gentlemen and get ourselves in order.

Our journal, *La Torre*, was not founded in order to produce articles in praise of Fascism and the honourable Mussolini. Neither Fascism nor the honourable Mussolini would know what to do with such praise. This journal was founded to defend *principles* which would remain absolutely the same for us whether we found ourselves in a Fascist regime, or else in a Communist, anarchist, or republican one.

If these principles were transported onto the playing field of politics (with which they have nothing to do in themselves), they would bring about an order of qualitative differentiation, and thus of hierarchy, and thus of *empire* in the widest sense. Heroism and the warrior's dignity could only be justified from a superior point of view in our conception. In the same way we must oppose all that is democratic and levelling ferment in the most precise way and on all levels.

To the extent that Fascism follows and defends these principles, so far we can consider ourselves Fascists. So far and no further.

This 'style' is not the one in vogue now among the masses. Today, people begin by calling themselves Fascists and proceed to declare themselves for or against this or that idea, to the extent that the Fascist political line accepts or denies it — even when 'Fascism' is reduced to a taboo or a kind of entry ticket, which, once it is paid for, allows everyone to express opinions that are personal and divergent. We, on the other hand, begin with calling ourselves imperialists, in the integral sense, and anti-modern, and we support a political party, a nation, or a position — or we oppose them — to the extent that they obey or do not obey the imperial or aristocratic ideal. Let us say it again. We do not engage in 'politics'. We do not engage in it and we do not want to. We are defending ideas and principles.

We are neither nationalists nor internationalists, because the problem of empire is superior to both these modern ideologies. We are in favour of the idea of 'heredity', 'missions, or commitments that are obligatory for an empire for a given privileged race. This old nationalist ideology, once Hebrew and then German and Prussian, on the one hand, and, on the other, Giobertian and Mazzinian,[1] is for us only the fruit of vanity and a superstitious 'philosophy of history'. Empire belongs to the nation that makes itself worthy of it and especially does not talk about it, but *wants* it.

Moreover, we can only say that, if we cast an eye on the panorama of the modern world, compared with other nations, Italy, together with Germany, seems to us to possess certain possibilities for comprehending values and principles that could provide a foundation for empire in greater measure. We do not know whether such possibilities will succeed in conquering — or even only in limiting — the destructive action that modern 'civilisation' exercises powerfully on both these countries. We certainly hope so, especially in the name of our spiritual tradition and then for the good of the particular land we happen to live in.

With this we seem to have said enough, at least for now and especially because we do not desire to indulge in programs and declarations. There is only one 'myth' which we openly oppose: the myth under which spirituality and culture are supposed to be seen as virtually dependent parts of politics. We affirm for our part that it is politics that ought to be conditioned by spirituality and culture, if we want to avoid reducing politics to something small, empirical, and contingent. Since the honourable Mussolini has conceded that the Fascist Party card does not bestow intelligence on those who do not have it, and because we are not dealing with intelligence here, but with something superior, we still believe that our theses even on this subject are not so 'heretical', even in this context. As for the rest, we only hope that the margin of 'consistency' in our attitude, which can be acknowledged by anyone whose horizon is not restricted to a hand's breadth in front of his nose, will have the chance to become ever larger. Whether or not that will happen, as we have said, certainly does not depend on us.

[1] Vincenzo Gioberti (1801–1852) was an Italian philosopher who favoured the independence of Italy from Austria and its unification under the leadership of the Pope. Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872) was a philosopher and Italian nationalist who led a number of failed insurrections intended both to gain Italian independence from the Austrian Empire and to unify Italy, although he remained at odds with others who fought for these goals due to his desire that Italy should become a republic rather than a kingdom.

Two Faces of Nationalism

(March 1931)

It is a simply a fact that the World War, far from exhausting the process of clarifying the nationalisms of Europe and beyond, has carried this process to its acute phase. There is therefore today good reason to consider carefully the significance of this fact.

What is the meaning of nationalism in the context of a philosophy of culture? We ask ourselves this question, to which we believe we can give the following answer: *the nationalistic direction admits two possibilities that are theoretically distinct and antithetical, although in practice they are often confused with one another. One involves degeneration and regression, while the other instead leads to superior values — the prelude to resurrection.*

Let us see how we can render such an idea comprehensible, which in its mere statement seems so rich in consequences.

It is impossible to understand a phenomenon like nationalism without placing it in the context of a general historical vision that rests on the solid foundation of criteria of value.

Today a vision of this kind has a positive result: the progressive fall of political power from one to another of the planes that marked the qualitative differentiation of human possibilities in ancient cultures. The process has proceeded from the threshold of 'historical' times all the way to our day, and has particularly focused on Western political history.[1]

It is well-known that the analogy between the political organism and the human has a tradition of remote antiquity. However, in every higher form of bodily organisation, there is a hierarchical connection with four distinct functions. On the lowest level there are the undifferentiated energies of pure vitality. They are dominated from above by the functions of trade and the general organic economy. These in turn find in the *will* what moves and directs the totality of the body in space.

[1] The idea of the regression of the castes was first enunciated in our Pagan Imperialism (Rome, 1928). We found it in greater detail in the ideas of the honorable V Vezzani, which, however, still has no written exposition. Finally, René Guénon has expounded it in systematic form in Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power (Paris, 1929 [English edition: Ghent, New York: Sophia Perennis, 2001). [Evola developed the ideas in Revolt Against the Modern World, Part II, chapters 14 and 15.—Tr.]

Finally, at the top, there is a power of intellect and liberty, which is the centre and light of the whole organism.

Traditions existed which served almost as spiritualised bodies, not as creatures of necessity or temporal contingency for the great body of the states. They express a will for a division and a hierarchy of rigorously corresponding classes and castes. Corresponding to vitality, economic organisation, will, and spirit, there were the four distinct classes of slaves (workers), merchants, warriors, and finally the bearers of a simultaneously regal and sacerdotal authority. Each caste is set up hierarchically above another: the masses under the control and rule of experts in trade and the utilisation of natural and economic resources; and the merchants under the authority of warrior aristocracies, who in turn are gathered around a leading figure of a complete and dominating type who gave testimony, as it were, of something more than human in man.

The ancient Orient (India) and the Far East knew a similar type of social organisation. There was a partial similarity to this in ancient Greece and ancient Rome which is found in the political teachings of Plato and Aristotle, and which came to life again in the Catholic and feudal Middle Ages.

It is important to emphasise that this kind of organisation corresponded to the type of a *qualitative* hierarchy, and was characterised by its clarity of higher forms of interests and individualities. In the ancient Orient the two higher castes were called 'reborn', and so were the expressions of a spiritual elite. In this vision, the Warrior and the Aristocrat had a significance which was more 'sacred' than 'political'. Every hierarchy based on economy, work, industry, and administration remained restricted to the two lower castes, which were the equivalent to what is the bodily and vital part in a human organism.

So the hierarchy of the four castes represented the progressive steps of an elevation of individuality even perceptually, precisely by means of adhesion to forms of activity that are superior to those appropriate to everyday living. Compared to the anonymous masses, intent only on 'living', the organisers of work and wealth — the second caste — already represented the outline of a type, a 'person'. But we can already feel more clearly the form of what is 'more than living' in the heroism of the Warrior and the ethos of the Aristocrat — the third caste — and that of a being that gives himself a law that surpasses the natural element, which is instinctive, collective, and utilitarian. Finally, if the Ascetic, King, and Priest were mixed in a unique essence in the primordial notion of leadership, this unity designates a universal and almost supernatural fulfilment of personality; the complete expression of what does not have

the force to liberate itself from the contingent in order to realise itself in the common man. To the degree to which such dominating figures, complete individuals, served as an axis for the entire social organism, this organism was like a body directed by the spirit, the temporal power and spiritual authority coincided, and the hierarchy was *legitimate*, in the absolute sense of the term.

The ideal model of this pattern, the basis of value, is independent of the degree and the form in which any particular society of the past could have realised it. Once the pattern is fixed, the realisation of the process of the progressive 'fall' from power in historical times becomes crudely evident. The era of the 'Sacred King' — of the natures that are simultaneously imperial and sacerdotal — already stands on the threshold of 'mythic' times. The peak disappears, power passes to the step immediately below — to the Warrior caste: monarchs of the lay type, military leaders, or lords of temporal justice.

Second collapse: the sunset of the great European monarchies, the decay of the aristocracies. Through revolutions (in England and France) and constitutions, they become empty remnants in respect of the 'nation's will.' Along with the parliamentary, republican, and bourgeois democracies, the rise of the capitalist oligarchies express the inevitable passage of political power from the second caste to the modern equivalent of the third caste — the merchants' caste.

Finally, the crisis of bourgeois society, the proletarian revolt, and the despotism of the masses that is established as purely collective, economic, and international entities forecast the final collapse, through which power passes to the last caste — the caste of those without names or faces, with the resulting reduction of every standard of living to the level of matter and number.

Another view: just like people who can no longer support the tension of the spirit, and then not even the tension of the will, of the force that moves the body — and they let themselves go — and then rise magnetically, almost like a soulless body, under the impulse of *another* force, which is barely seen, out of the shadows of pure vitality.

It is time to acknowledge the illusory character of all the myths of 'progress' and to open our eyes to reality. It is time to recognise the harsh destiny of spiritual destruction that has weighed on the West and that today is ripening its last fruits.

To reach our specific problem we need to emphasise that, in the centre of the involuted progress we have just described, the individual moves toward the collective, in strict dependence on the reduction of the interests from which the higher castes

drew their legitimate hierarchical authority in favour of the interests of the lower castes, as we mentioned.

In reality a man can be free in himself only by adhering to his freedom of action. In the two symbols of pure Action (heroism) and pure Knowledge (contemplation, *ascesis*) that are supported by an aristocratic regime, the two higher castes open ways for man to participate in this 'super-worldly' order, which is the only one in which he can belong to himself and gather the integral and universal sense of personality. By destroying all interest in that order and by concentrating on practical and utilitarian goals, economic results, and all the other pursuits of the two lower castes, man disintegrates, loses his centre, and opens himself up to stronger forces that tear him out of himself and hand him over to the irrational and pre-personal energies of the collective life. It is rising above these which establishes the power of every truly superior culture.

This explains why the collective has been acquiring more and more power in the social forms of the recent past, so much as it were to return life to the totemism of primitive communities. Nation, race, society, and humanity rise today to the level of a mystic personality, and demand unconditional surrender and subordination from the individuals which form part of them, while at the same time hatred is fomented for those superior and dominating individualities in the name of 'liberty', who were the only ones in which the principle of subordination and obedience of individuals was sacred and justified. This tyranny of the group is not limited to affirming itself in what has a political and social character in the life of the individual. It arrogates for itself a moral and spiritual right. By insisting that culture and spirit are no longer disinterested forms of activity and ways to elevate the individual, but instead have become organs dependent on the collective temporal entity, it proclaims the morality of those who assert that the mind has sense and value only as an instrument in service to the body. Man, before identifying as personality or as ego, should identify with the social group, faction, or nation — this is one of the specific commandments of recent subversive ideologies, through which they cause the return of the relationship through which the primitive identifies with the *totem* of his own tribe or clan.

In the reawakening of the Russian race, in its assuming a universal prophetic mission for itself in Sovietism, we have a confirmation of the significance of this regression into primitive social levels, which is present in so many modern forms. This is precisely the opinion of those who see the definitive revolt of an Asiatic barbarian race in the new Russia, which rejects the bid for European civilisation undertaken for two centuries by the Tsars, and which is attempting to ally itself with

the forms of social decomposition of the European world. Bolshevism is the revival of the ancient spirit of the Slavic race in modern form: a race without tradition that in its social mysticism, its amalgam of sensuality and spirituality, in the predominance of pathos over ethos, of instinct over rationality, leads us back to the forms of pre-personal lack of discrimination and Communist promiscuity found among primitive peoples.

The huge shock caused by the Great War has returned this element to a state of freedom and has made of it a terrible ferment of decomposition for the parts of Europe that are still healthy. In announcing the advent of the 'proletarian age', 'Soviet culture' has explicitly vowed itself to the destruction of the 'leprosy' of personality and liberty, 'the poisons of bourgeois society', and the principles of all evil; to the abolition not only of private property but of every independent thought and every 'movement that is supernatural and foreign to class interests' (Lenin); to the advent of the 'omnipotent mass man', which alone ought to live and shape every manner of life and thought in individuals. The modern side of Bolshevism consists only in 'method'. Mechanisation and rationalisation are its preferred means to realise the 'mass man', which was already living mystically in the Slavic soul, in a purely economic, universal social regime. Soviet culture confronts — and is aware of it — another race, which equally claims a universal regenerative mission and the presumption to represent the final world of culture: America.

In America, instead of expressing the vitality of a people who remains in the pre-civilised state, the process follows the inflexible determinism that wants man, in the act of shutting himself off from every form of pure spiritualty in order to give himself over to the will of temporal things, to cease *ipso facto* to belong to himself, and becomes a dependent part of an irrational collective entity that he can no longer dominate. This is the state America has reached, following the ways of the sanctification of the temporal and the secularising of the sacred opened by the Protestant heresy. Carrying to its limit the ideals of the material conquest of the world that Europe had proposed, America blossomed — almost without noticing it — in making practical and physical every sense of power, sanity, activity, and personality, so as to construct a yet more fearful form of barbarism. Here the ascetic is considered as a waste of time, as an anachronistic parasite 'useless to society', while the Warrior is viewed as a dangerous fanatic who opportune humanitarian and pacifistic preventive measures ought to perhaps replace with a prize fighter. The perfect type, the spiritual champion, is instead the 'man who works, who produces', and every form of activity, even spiritual activity, is valued only in terms of 'work' and of 'productive

work'. This is the most characteristic trait to show how it is precisely the representative type of the last of the ancient classes which stands at the top of such a society: the slaves destined to hard work. Here too, having renounced his spiritual personality, man ceases to have any value except for conditions imposed by the collective organisation, infected by the fever of producing, 'realising', and moving: conditions that, in addition, assume a moral and even religious value and tend to standardise the same souls in a collective and levelling *forma mentis*,[2] so as to scorn even the capacity to notice what level of degeneration all this constitutes.

These are the forms through which the cycle closes and the collapse is consummated. Russia and America are the two indicators and two converging faces of the same thing. The body moves backwards from the human organism, as it was when it was supported by the light and authority of the higher castes, to the type of a headless, subhuman organism: advent of the beast without a face.

We now possess all the elements we need to seriously confront the problem: *what is the meaning of nationalism in the modern world?*

One type of nationalism is clearly recognisable on the basis of what we have said. It is the level immediately preceding the international forms of economic and proletarian collectivism.

What is important in this nationalism is not the fact of the rise of a distinct national consciousness *vis à vis* others, but the fact that the 'nation' becomes a person, a being in itself, and the inability to surpass this right of blood and soil that concerns only the natural and sub-intellectual aspect of man, the impossibility of the individual to value himself otherwise than in terms of a given collectivity and a given tradition — these traits are elevated to ethical values. The fact of belonging to a 'nation' here confers a mystical halo on everything, which guards its inviolability and imposes respect for it. This sub-intellectual ethnic element not only refuses to acknowledge authority in superior principles, it reduces such principles to its own service. The 'nation' demands its own tribute — only later and subordinately is there room for reality, truth, and spirit. In certain nationalist forms, however, matters go beyond this. Every disinterested and objective criterion is accused of abstraction. The claim is made that even for reality, truth, and culture, it is impossible to ignore national tradition and political interest. This is why we hear talk of *our* scientific, philosophical, and even religious tradition.[3] Against everything that is not 'ours' and

[2] Latin: 'way of thinking'.

[3] When we speak of tradition in a negative sense, as we are now doing, we mean to refer to that conception that does not imply any element that is truly intellectual, and therefore super-ethnic, and

does not 'support the nation' there is placed a prejudice of lack of support or, at least, suspicious disinterest.

And just as there is no tolerance for the free manifestation of higher activities that might create a reality superior to what is ethnically conditioned, so in the ambiance of such a nationalism there is no respect for the superior personality except insofar as it is 'representative' of the nation. Born near the revolutions that have overthrown the remnants of the aristocratic and feudal regime, this nationalism therefore expresses a pure 'mob spirit'. It is a variety of the democratic intolerance for every leader that is not a mere tool of the 'popular will', dependent on its sanction in everything and for everything. It is easy to see that, between nationalism and a Soviet-style or American anonymity, there is basically only a difference of degree. In the Soviet version the individual is dissolved back into the original ethnic and national stocks; in the American one, the very differentiation that belongs to these ethnic stocks are overcome and a vaster collectivising and disintegration into the mass is produced. To take the people from one level to the other, it is enough that the mystique of race gives way to a structure of a purely economic and mechanical type. In such a structure, the last remnant of qualitative difference is eliminated through its impersonal nature. With the rationalisation and mechanisation of social life, the ways remain virtually open for the advent of the mass man without a country. Given that the level of contemporary culture is precisely that of economic and mechanical power, and every criterion of value and greatness is reduced more or less directly to this level, it is perhaps only a question of time before this change comes to pass.

We can ask the following question, however: can nationalism assume another meaning? To this query we think we can respond affirmatively. We have said that nationalism appears as a form of passage to the sides of political dominion that lay in the hands of the third caste, but before the dominion of the lowest caste. This nature renders it susceptible to a double meaning. If we can meet this form of passage in the direction of a fall, we can also meet it in the direction of a recovery and of an eventual reintegration. Supposing that we have touched bottom, anyone who has found the strength to rise again would again meet up with nationalism — but this time another nationalism! As with the magnitude of 'vectors' in physics, this phenomenon can only be defined in terms of the factor of direction.

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that — to use Chesterton's term, 'democracy of the dead' — represents an extension in time of what is the right presently accorded to majorities in respect to space: the right of the dead over the living, based on the fact of being dead members of the same race.

In the case of the first nationalism, the direction is towards collectivisation realised at the level of 'nation' — while in the second case it heads from collectivisation toward the reconstruction of a new *aristocratic* hierarchy.

To express the presuppositions of this second nationalism, it is especially important to pay attention to the words of Paul de Lagarde,[4] the noted exponent of German nationalism. The 'human' being is a step down from the 'national' being and the 'national' being is a step down from the being who is a 'person'. In other words, in respect to the quality 'humanity', the element of the difference 'nation' adds an increment of value X, and the element of the single personality adds to this X a further increment of value Y. It is therefore the idea of a hierarchy that goes from the abstract to the concrete. The abstract is the collective, the general. The concrete, on the other hand, is the different, the individual. Compared to the amorphous mass of 'humanity', the rise of the differentiated national consciousness can therefore constitute a first step, but the national consciousness, the ethnic stock, ought to represent in its turn an unformed matter compared to individuals. When they are fulfilled and become themselves, and when they actualise themselves in forms of life superior to those conditioned simply by either blood or collective exigencies, they move from the state of chaos to one of cosmos, and from potentiality to act. And then the relationships are turned on their heads. The nation is no longer the end of the individual, but instead the individual as aristocratic or spiritual personality is the end of the nation insofar as the nation remains, as it were, its mother, almost in the same material condition that earth can represent in respect to a tree, which frees itself from the Earth with its higher parts and rises toward the free heights.[5]

This is the fundamental point of difference. To clarify it definitively, it is enough to return to the qualitative sense of the ancient hierarchy of the castes. Nationalism can never be a prelude to resurrection — not creating, but overcoming the

[4] Paul de Lagarde (1827–1891) was a biblical scholar and orientalist at the University of Göttingen who was one of the first Pan-German theorists. Fervently anti-Christian and anti-Semitic, he called for the development of a new German national religion more reflective of Prussian values, and aggressive German expansionism.

[5] Paul de Lagarde, Deutsche Schriften I (Dieterich: Göttingen, 1878), p. 164. ['Catholicism and liberalism never realised that an individual nation stands higher than humanity, and every individual member of a nation is more — that is, should be more — than just national, more than only what every fellow national as such is: that with nationalism, a very valuable X is added to humanity, and with the individual personality a much more valuable Y is added to this very valuable X; that humanity, nationality, ethnicity, family, and individuality are a pyramid whose peak reaches nearer heaven than its base', from Paul de Lagarde, Deutsche Schriften I (L. Horstmann: Göttingen, 1903), p. 141.—Tr.]

mechanistic and collectivist state — unless we posit the bare necessity of restoring an order of values that cannot be reduced to what is practical, 'social', and economic, in order to confer on these higher values a primacy and direct authority over all the rest. Without this, no hierarchy exists, and without hierarchy, the return to a higher, spiritualised type of state is impossible. In fact, hierarchy does not simply mean subordination; it means the subordination of what has an inferior nature to what has a superior one. The inferior is everything that can be measured in practical, self-centred, and worldly terms. The superior is what expresses a pure and disinterested form of activity. Every other criterion is illusory and perverting. The case is 'illusory' whenever we think of hierarchy in the context of the economy alone and therefore on the basis of differences of money, political rank, of being a white collar worker, of class in the Marxist sense, and so on. The principle of a true hierarchy can arise only with the appearance of interests which are superior to the economic level as a whole. We must begin from the idea that we do not live to develop an economy, but that the economy is a means to an end. This end, however, is internal elevation, the deploying of the personality in an integral and 'otherworldly' sense. Hierarchy is therefore an absolute 'perversion' when it expresses subservience of what is not earthly to what is earthly, and when the spirit is made the tool of the body. Unfortunately with 'pragmatism' reigning on every level, even in science, with a vulgar Machiavellianism and general social climbing, we see this triumph of the earthly over the spiritual today in the great majority of cases. There is nothing more anti-hierarchical and even more anarchic than these bogus types of hierarchies.

In the context of a restorative nationalism we are dealing with the following: first of all, giving a formal order to everything that corresponds to the bodily, vital, or animal part of a human organism in the social whole, and that represents dominion over the two inferior classes: work, economy, and political organisation in the strict sense, creating an 'economic peace' that will bring about 'unwinding' and allow energies of a higher type to liberate themselves and act on a higher plane. Then men can begin reconstructing the second caste, which is that of the warrior aristocracy, with the monarch as the first of aristocrats. It is a pure aristocracy in which the ideal of the higher formation of the personality can be realised. We should not look at the corrupt and degenerate stocks, against which an easy demagogic critique can be practiced. We should look at the original type of the Lord, as a being in which self-mastery, refinement, a disinterested attitude, culture, honour, loyalty, and especially the qualities of leaders have become a conquest consolidated on the sound basis of blood. Aristocracy is the necessary extension of positive nationalism, because if

nationalism delineates the boundaries of blood and of an ethnic stock, aristocracy effects a selection and a further differentiation within such limits, leading from the general and collective towards the individual on a higher plane, which is the meaning of every real progress.

Once an aristocratic tradition has been reconstructed, the first glimmer of spirit will be infused into the body of the state, and nationalism, having achieved its proper task, can yield to higher forms which correspond to types of states that were maintained by the second caste. This will be characterised by an absolute personalisation of all relationships, of the passage from the mechanical to the organic, and from constriction to liberty. For instance, in other times, soldiers did not exist. There were warriors. They did not fight for the 'nation' or for 'right', but for their king. They did not obey 'social laws'; they were loyal to their own Lord. Anyone who submitted knew to whom he was submitting, and did it almost with pride. Responsibility was assumed by leaders and monarchs, instead of passing the buck to faceless entities or ideological taboos. Authority rested on the greatness of the personality and the capacity to devote oneself to what did not allow itself to buy or sell or measure in terms of what was 'useful'. It was no longer a question of 'living', but now of what was 'more than living'.

In turn, this will be the basis for a type of state of a higher form, but it is too distant for us to do more than sketch it in outline. Still, we can emphasise that just as a group of men can remain free and distinct as bodies, but can be united in a unique idea, so when the elites of the various stocks will be able to establish themselves on a level of true spiritual superiority, the paths will be virtually opened to a new universal culture. This does not mean 'internationalism', and much less a levelling humanitarianism — both of them creations of a materialistic mentality, since the reality and the political distinctions of the states stands at the same level as that of bodies, and we are not dealing here with the unity of bodies, but instead with the unity of culture and of really super-individual collectives. We find examples of this universality in the Catholic Middle Ages, the Roman Empire, and India, which demonstrate the possibility of a profound unity of culture and spirit along with the plurality of states or races that are ethnically distinct, and often even competing against one another. If we want to speak of a future *European* consciousness, we should speak of it only in these terms.

This, however, goes far beyond our present task, which is delineating the two opposing meanings of nationalism. We think we have made these two meanings quite clear. As for examining to what degree the variety of nationalisms present today and

competing in the various states fall under one or the other meaning, this is a problem of an empirical character, which falls completely outside our consideration.

Paneuropa and Fascism: Colloquium with Count R N Coudenhove-Kalergi

(14 May 1933)

Count Coudenhove-Kalergi[1] is currently in Rome. He is the well-known promoter of the so-called 'Pan-European' movement and also the author of various distinguished works of philosophy and politics. Count Coudenhove came to Italy principally to meet Mussolini and to gain a first-hand impression of the part that the new Italy can have in respect to the problem of the unification of the lacerated political and spiritual reality of our continent. Since we had been in touch with him for some time, we found ways to have interesting meetings with the head of the Pan-European movement. He graciously agreed to the request of the honourable Farinacci to expound his most recent points of view concerning Europe directly in the pages of *Regime Fascista*.

'There are three great political problems, in relation to which Europe is today in crisis', Count Coudenhove tells us, 'that is, the problem of *constitutional reform*, the *social* problem, and the *European*problem in the narrow sense. Among the various nations, Fascist Italy is the one which has given the greatest contribution to the solution of the first two points. Italy has already surpassed the problem of constitutional reform. It has given the necessary elements for the solution of the second problem, the social problem. It is destined to effectively confront the third and greatest problem, the European problem.'

[1] Count Richard Nikolaus von Coudenhove-Kalergi (1894–1972) was an Austrian whose mother was Japanese. A Mason, and a supporter of Woodrow Wilson's plans for Europe, he founded the Pan-European Union in 1922 with the intention of creating a united Europe based on conservative, aristocratic principles which would be capable of defending itself from Soviet incursions. He envisioned similar unions for the other regions of the globe, and believed that all races and social classes were destined to disappear as a result of the mixing that would take place within them. He remained active in his efforts toward uniting Europe for the remainder of his life.

We asked, 'Do you think that the Fascist solution to the constitutional and social problems can be valuable in solving the international one, as the Marxist and Bolshevik ones claim to be doing?'

'The Fascist constitution could have a value that is more than purely Italian, but could be more generally European', Coudenhove answers, 'insofar as it expresses a wise mixture of the authoritarian and aristocratic principle with what can be healthy in the democratic principle. It concedes room to justice and the enlightened command of superior personalities, and at the same time gives a solid base to the principle of identity, free adherence, and cooperation, by disciplining every power in the name of the higher idea of the nation. The European soul, as I conceive it, is characterised by three fundamental components: heroism, personality, and sociality. Since the Fascist solution includes all three in a wise equilibrium, so it presents itself as the most suitable one for assuming a character of European universality.'

Count Coudenhove continues, 'From the social point of view, the Fascist contribution consists essentially in the new corporative idea as an integrative surpassing of whatever could be positive in the famous Marxist myth of class struggle. In this regard, on the basis of a corporative reform realised within the principal states, I do not think we can exclude the idea of a future European corporative assembly, intended to study the most vital technical problems that are posed to the complex economy of our continent from a totalitarian viewpoint, and without restraint. This would have as its goal the attaining of the same results for which, on the contrary, people are now invoking the utopias of the Red international. On this same subject, it seems to me important to emphasise that, among the mistakes of the democratic regime, is allowing the parliamentary system to bypass politics. For me, separating the economic element from the political element is a necessity in a plan of renewal. This has already been achieved with the Fascist transformation of Parliament in the corporative chamber.[2] Naturally the goal here should not be a split, but the restoration of its own liberty to politics, rather than tying it down to the economy (as happens in Leftist ideology). This would instead permit politics to possess a wise, rationalising control from above on the economy when definite necessities present themselves.'

Returning to the idea of European solidarity, we ask the Count on what level he believes that such collaboration would be necessary.

[2] The Fascists had established a National Council of Corporations, which represented the interests of the industrialists and the workers but which remained under the control of the National Fascist Party, as well as the Grand Council of Fascism, which controlled the state's various institutions.

'In respect of three principal unities: *economic*, *foreign affairs* — in the sense of a unified politics of the European nations in the face of non-European ones — and finally *military* unity. For a true European renewal, we absolutely need an agreement on these three points among the principal European powers. For the rest, there should remain the most ample independence of initiative.'

We know that Coudenhove has often been accused of pacifism. So we confront the question head on, by asking him what he meant by pacifism. Does he defend the generic and anti-virile ideal of peace, denying the higher, spiritual meaning that the experience and tests of a war can offer both to individuals and to the race? Or does he defend an inter-European pacifism, aimed only at unifying the various European forces, but not ruling out that a unified and concordant bloc of European power achieved in this way could find a renewed validity in an imperial and supremacist ideal of our races in confronting the remaining forces of the world? Coudenhove had no difficulty in acknowledging that his ideas move basically, and especially, in this second direction. He reminds us how often he has invoked internal European peace only because it is childish to persist in reciprocally paralysing the economic and military forces of the various European states, because a European defensive unity is necessary and salutary in the face of the three greatest anti-European powers: Russia, Asia, and America — and perhaps even an offensive one, as well.

'As for what concerns the more immediate and political side of the problem of European solidarity', Count Coudenhove added, 'we are dealing especially with counterbalancing the various forces, rather than trying to construct unilateral blocs of alliance. From this point of view I hold it essential for the pan-European idea to lay the basis for a Franco-Italian accord, and this for a double end: first of all, because only in this way can we reach an equilibrium between the two greatest elements of European culture, the *Latin* and the *German*, an equilibrium that would prevent the rise of hegemonic tendencies from either part. Second, before a Franco-Italian accord, the reasons for the Little Entente[3] would automatically collapse, and there would be an easy resolution of the problem of the small states of Eastern Europe. This

[3] In 1920, following the Versailles Treaty which ended the First World War, the Little Entente was a series of agreements for collective defence signed by Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia in the event of an attack by Hungary, as it was feared at the time that Hungary might attempt to reabsorb these territories as part of a restoration of the Habsburg monarchy. Although this danger quickly passed, the Little Entente was maintained as a collective security arrangement against the Soviet Union and other threats, and later even began to serve as a means for economic integration. It gradually weakened and eventually collapsed in 1938.

last point is, in my opinion, rather important, because I believe that it is precisely from such states that the most likely incentive for a new conflagration could arise, which will certainly compromise the destinies of our entire culture.'

Naturally, Count Coudenhove is aware that our personal ideas would rather be oriented towards a European unification on the preliminary basis of an Italo-German bloc, adhering very strictly to ideals of an imperial and fascist type. Without disguising the obstacle to such perspectives that would be presented by the return of Germany to an exclusivist and essentially materialist racism, we ask the Count his view on the Franco-German question.

'This question effectively represents the fundamental obstacle to the realisation of a pan-European idea', Coudenhove answers, 'and I believe that the best way to resolve it is to arrive there indirectly. I mean, by means of that international politics of equilibrium and compensation of the European powers, about which I spoke a while ago. This has an especially tactical and preventative significance in respect to a possible Franco-German divergence, while maintaining the stability of the greater affinity that can exist between Germany and Italy in terms of political constitution and ethical formation. Here we see clearly the absolutely leading role reserved for your nation in respect to a possible "Pan-Europa". Because of its independence from the contingencies and crises of parliamentary regimes, Italy is today the nation that is most suited to conduct a far-sighted international politics. In practical terms, Italy has the possibility to become the umpire of relations between France and Germany, and this could become the first step on a new path. The moment has arrived for Fascism to direct its attention beyond the social and constitutional problem, concerning which its restorative cycle is already complete, to the problem of Europe, since, given the present situation and the recent upheavals of Europe's international politics, Italy is now really in a position to hold the keys to the destiny of our continent in its hands. This feeling for the right moment, joined to a Latin sense of equilibrium, is one of the most outstanding gifts of Mussolini's genius.'

'It is my firm conviction concerning Fascism's super-national mission that has brought me to Rome, where I have had the honour to be received twice and with all cordiality by the Duce', the Count finished. 'And I sincerely hope that the new Italy will remain faithful to its great tradition, working with every means at its disposal for this European idea, which had already been formulated by Dante, actualised spiritually by the Church of Rome, realised militarily by the Italian Napoleon, and finally renewed in a more modern way by the Mazzinian myth of the "New Europe".'

Race and Culture

(January 1934)

Everyone knows the new importance that the *theory of race* has assumed today, especially because of the recent upheavals in German political ideology. Various discussions have emerged around this theory and its applications. For some, racism is the symbol of a new spiritualism. For others, it is the danger of a contaminating eruption of the biological element into the level of higher values. For some, it is a superstitious myth, since the idea of race is today something extremely undefined. For others, it instead represents an appeal to a new realism, the acknowledgement of the deepest substratum to which every organically creative action ought to appeal. With all this disagreement, some relevant considerations in the spirit of offering a clarifying explanation may be of interest, since it is not rare to observe connections, even unconscious ones, between the theory of race and the notion of the nation as *stock*, which is often taken up by many reactions against the dangers of recent cosmopolitan culture.

The premise of racism is decidedly pluralistic. 'Humanity' does not exist. *Many* races exist, and each of them has special gifts and characteristics, which cannot be changed without sinking into degeneration and decadence. According to deep biological and morphological laws, by which every single race is constrained, there corresponds its own soul, its own truth, and its own worldview, which can be now obvious, now latent, but does not change in essence in the course of centuries. From this arises a cultural and spiritual pluralism. For as many races as exist, there are just as many 'truths' and conceptions of the world. It is debated whether it is possible to speak in absolute terms of the justice, or lack of it, of a given worldview. It can be spoken of only in relation to a definite race, to its goals and its will to existence and power, because they are biologically innate and are sufficient for manifesting its life, while for a different race they could represent not only a serious danger, but their complete destruction. Racism therefore means acknowledgement of a definite differentiation of men as a basic fact: the relationship of a given group of men to a 'type'; purification of the stock that corresponds to it from extraneous ethnic and cultural elements; intimate adherence of the individual to the tradition of his own

blood and to the 'truths' that are intimately linked to this blood; and elimination of all mixing.

This is the most recent form of the doctrine of race, in which two elements are acknowledged. Race is not considered only as a biological concept, but as a cultural concept. What, however, is the relationship between the two concepts? What is the ultimate reference point? In order to understand racism, to define the extent of its claims, and to integrate its positive aspects, we must confront this problem.

When racism is a reaction against an abstract universalism, against the Enlightenment and rationalist ideal of 'immortal principles valid for everyone', when it is the demand of a differentiated and organic type of truth, which is fitted to correspond to the deepest forces of our being — under this aspect, racism certainly represents something positive and healthy. But it must be acknowledged with equal clarity that racism becomes an aberration whenever it is felt that a defence and culture of race of an almost zootechnical type in its simply biological and empirical aspect is the equivalent *eo ipso*[1] of something creative and decisive. If the preservation and reintegration of the purity of race in an animal can be everything, in a man this can constitute a necessary condition under certain aspects, but in no case is it a sufficient condition, because man, as such, is not defined by the simple factor of 'race'.

This ingenuous materialism goes too far when there is talk simply of 'race,' but even more so of a 'spirit' of race, passing therefore to a sort of *mystique of blood*. In reality, a mystique of race is what marks the lowest types of human society. It is the characteristic of the primitive, totemic type of society. The *totem* is the mystic spirit of the tribe and the order, elevated to a taboo and conceived as the intimate life-force of the individual members, as the soul of their souls and as the primary element within them. Here, the state in which the individual feels himself as a group, race, or tribe rules unconditionally and draws its fundamental distinctive traits from this feeling, not only biological ones, but psychic ones to an even greater extent. There is a type of racism that, as mystique of the blood *mutatis mutandis*,[2] leads back precisely to this level and therefore, despite all appearances, to forms of naturalistic and, in the last analysis, pre-personal life, and therefore constitutes a danger as serious as the universalism which it is combatting. Race in this case remains *nature*, and the claim it makes before the values of personality and culture must be deceptive and false.

[1] Latin: 'thereby'.

[2] Latin: 'the necessary changes having been made'.

In Germany, racists are always talking about *Aryanism*. Unfortunately, they are very far from an understanding of this concept that could lead them to a higher view. In fact, according to its original conception, *arya* is synonymous with *dvija*, that is, 'reborn' or 'twice born'. Its nature is defined by a definite act: initiation. The *Manava Dharma Shastra*[3] (11.172) actually declares that, when the *arya* neglects this act, he has no way to actually distinguish himself from the *shudra*, that is, the element that constitutes the dark and servile castes, which were originally formed from aborigines conquered by the Aryans.[4] If we understand 'initiation' not in its absolute traditional sense, which is related to interior horizons that are today almost completely forgotten, but in its analogical sense of *culture* — that is, of an action by which the individual frees himself from his own base nature, reacts against it, and imposes a higher law upon it — then we have the fundamental premise for reaching a more elevated conception of the doctrine of race.

When a being owes everything that gives form and support to his life to the forces of instinct and blood, he still belongs to 'nature'. In the case of a human being, he can still develop superior qualities on this basis, but such qualities will always remain an expression of nature, not a possession of his personality, like the splendid racial traits that can be found in a tiger or every 'thoroughbred'. The passage from the kingdom of *nature* to that of *culture* (in the aforesaid classic sense, and not the modern sense of instruction, erudition, etc.) takes place only when a different power is manifested that stands in relation to the simple element of race as the soul stands in relation to the body formed in its image. In this way, the laws and instincts of organic nature are no longer the basis and principle of the spiritual faculties and 'truths' that belong to a given blood, but *vice versa*. Here we find a *style* that assumes 'nature' as the primary matter and vehicle, but does not allow itself to be reduced to nature, and vouches for the presence and formative action of an element of meta-biological order. *Exactly this 'style' constitutes what can be called race in a higher sense, with reference to man as man and not as animal, 'superior' or not.*

[3] The Manava Dharma Shastra, or Laws of Manu, is one of the oldest and most important Vedic texts, describing how law and social structures should be maintained.

[4] According to some versions of the Aryan Invasion Theory (AIT), which was generally accepted at the time Evola was writing, Indian civilisation arose when lighter-skinned Aryans from the north invaded India, which was then the home of darker-skinned Dravidians known as the Indus Valley civilisation, and conquered it, and the Vedic caste system was established, in part, in order to differentiate the Dravidians from the Aryans and maintain the purity of the former. Today the AIT is in dispute, and many scholars question if it actually transpired in this manner, or indeed whether it happened at all, the archaeological record being inconclusive.

In the animal kingdom and primitive societies, race belongs to the biological level, and begins and ends appearing as a mere fact, impervious to any creative initiative and predetermined collectively. When we talk of man, though, 'race' no long stands on this level, although it manifests itself in it, rendering itself visible through a typical and well-determined complex of qualities, attitudes, dispositions, sensibilities, and interests, which, however, in the last analysis, are only signs and symbols for the fact of spiritual nature: *culture as the deep substratum of race*.

When the ancient traditions speak of the 'divine' origins of certain races; when in our classical antiquity the patricians based their claim to dignity on the basis of the fact of having a sacred heredity united to dignity of blood, which had been awakened to life by a 'hero' or semi-divine forefather and which was connected to a ritual tradition; when *arya* counted as a synonym for 'reborn' or the Iranian-Aryan dominating castes defined themselves through participation in particular forms of a 'heavenly fire', and so on — in all these echoes, once we overlook the mythological and symbolic aspect, we rediscover exactly these meanings. And so we reach the opposition between cultures in which race signifies *culture,* and those in which race signifies *nature*. If we should arrive at the problem of racial differences beyond the purely empirical ones, and beyond the problem of the distinction between superior and inferior races — it is precisely in these terms that it will be necessary to speak. As a man is worthier of the name, man, insofar as he knows how to give a form and law to his character, tendencies, and actions — a form and law that end with reflecting even his exterior figure — so a race stands so much higher insofar as its ethnic tradition is accompanied by a dominating spiritual tradition, almost as body and soul, and insofar as both are found in an unbreakable union.

On the other hand, today's revival of the inferior, naturalistic concept of race can only work in a negative way. In fact, there exist today values of 'civilisation', if not of spirituality, or at least of intellectuality, which, can only appear as extrinsic matters to be subordinated to the values of 'blood' and 'race' before this concept. At the centre, and as taboo, a purely cumulative and collectivistic entity is placed. A culture is also allowed, insofar as it is made an instrument of nature, with the consequent subordination of every value, every truth, and every dignity of personality to the race's coarsest will to existence and power. In this way a *radical irrationalism* takes the upper hand, as a deviation that is as dangerous for the elements of every true human greatness as for the anti-racist and internationalist rationalism it fights.

If it is natural that, in the context of the naturalistic conception of the hygiene of the race, the external defence of simple ethnic purity, together with a fundamental

distrust of everything that is of the 'other' — this is presented as a universal panacea — for practical purposes, we remain here in the realm of pure myth. If the true centre is race as 'nature', given the present state of race-mixing, looking for racial elements fit to serve as solid reference points for racist hygiene in their purity is in fact a hopeless undertaking. At most, a *negative* action will be possible, meaning the prevention of further mixing, but not *positive* action, meaning the creative reintegration of the original power of blood in the whole of ethnic stocks that have been changed and are vacillating in an individualistic and 'civilised' world. It is no use getting in touch with ancient traditions and ancient mythologies of the stock on the basis of the 'mystique of blood'. Unless the plans are changed, all this can only be effective today in terms of aiding the rise of the irrational and primitive, that is, of elements that are lower and not higher than the world of common culture. Even if it may be harmful in its deviations, however, it could also furnish support for the intimate formation of Western man.

We now pass to another conception, that is, to the idea of race not as nature, but as culture. In this understanding, the defence of race implies a double condition. Race here corresponds to the refinement, selection, even the formation, realised in nature, of a higher power, and transmitted through ethnic biological heredity. It is evident that we are dealing here with preserving and defending this same heredity, but additionally and especially it is necessary to keep this spiritual tension or internal, formative soul alive, since it is this which raised this material all the way to that definite form. This is the source of the error of racists like de Gobineau:[5] the decadence of a culture is not — as they claim — the result of the mixture of the race that originally called it to life with other races. The true cause is not ethnic, biological, or demographic degeneration. The truth is rather that a race with its own culture degenerates when its spirit declines, when the intimate tension to which it owed its 'form' and its 'type' disappears. It is then that the race changes or is corrupted because it is damaged in its root. Then the ethnic and biological elements are deprived of the close link that held them together in the unity of form, and the first alteration will suffice to produce rapid degeneration and corruption. The collapse and change of the stock is not only moral, but more than that, ethnic and biological. In this case it

[5] Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau (1816–1882) was a French novelist who is also credited with writing the first theory of modern racialism, The Inequality of Human Races. In it, de Gobineau first asserted the idea of Aryan supremacy, although his ideas were greatly at odds with the later views of the National Socialists.

returns to the level of the simple forces of nature, and succumbs to its own contingency on this level.

Certainly, the preservation of ethnic purity ought to appear — where talk about it corresponds to reality — as the most favourable condition so that the 'spirit' of a race can maintain itself in its original force and purity, just as in the individual the health and integrity of the body are warrants for the full efficiency of the higher faculties. Otherwise, a man who is morally constituted and strong in his will does not have a proper internal life because of his external weakness. Analogously, when a race has a truly strong and complete culture for its soul and basis, the simple fact of its contact with and even mixing with other races far from simply signifies its destruction. On the contrary, its sprit may work like an invisible and irresistible ferment on the foreign elements, so as to reduce them to the same type. There is no need to mention the historical examples of this process, which are known to everybody — *the process of the passage from the idea of race to the idea of empire*.

This is a very important element for the opposition we mentioned above. Where the naturalistic idea of race can only lead to a limiting particularism, to a petty and jealous exclusivism synonymous, in most cases, with fear before horizons whose extent seems beyond one's capacity — in the higher idea of race, the potential of the imperial function is inherent, which surpasses both levelling internationalism and a disintegrating racism. Mussolini correctly writes, 'For Fascism, the tendency to empire, that is to say the expansion of nations, is a manifestation of vitality, its contrary (the stay-at-home attitude) is a sign of decadence.'[6] The element that makes *a* race, truly and spiritually, inevitably leads it beyond itself.

There is a final consideration. It is an element inherent in the very concept that every 'return' to race as nature must have a character that is collectivist and, in its political assumptions, demagogic. This demagogy disguises itself in mystic vestments and authoritarian structures. It is a return of the tyrannical power of the pure *demos*,[7] the advent of the 'spirit of the mob', and the reincarnation of the 'primordial horde'.

The 'return' to race in the other conception means instead returning to its internal tradition, and is closely connected to the idea of a *leader* [*Duce*] and a *hierarchical order*. If the race is a formation from above, a triumph of 'culture' over 'nature', the renewal of the primordial formative power that is sleeping in its breast

[6] 'The Doctrine of Fascism', in Benito Mussolini, Essays on Fascism (London: Black House Publishing, n.d.), p. 44.

[7] Ancient Greek: 'the people'.

can, practically speaking, only be effective in an *élite* with a clear gaze, a firm will, and an unshaken superiority; an *élite* that will act in two directions. First of all it will act in a function of order, authority, formation, and articulation of all that is social in terms of a state that becomes the entelechy, that it, precisely the vital formative principle of the internal and of the nation. In second place, it will act with an *action of presence*. We mean that its heads, as outstanding incarnations of the 'type' of the race, present themselves as 'realised ideals', and as such rekindle a power lying deep within individuals. They are the source of the magic of enthusiasm and animation they arouse in terms of true recognition and heroic and conscious dedication, rather than a passive, collective suggestion. This was exactly the idea that Mussolini expressed in speaking of the stock not as quantity, collective, or naturalistic unity, but on the contrary as a 'multitude unified by an *idea*', an idea that 'is realised in the consciousness and will of the few or even of one only; an ideal which moves to its realisation in the consciousness and will of all'.[8] Then the multiple forces of a stock, which have become fatally directed towards change and disintegration when they were deprived of inner support and abandoned to the contingency of material factors, whether ethnic or political in the narrow sense, rediscover a solid and living point of unity in a form of galvanising contact.

This is the concluding point. To the return of the mystique of the 'primordial horde', to racist ideology that subordinates everything to the right of a mere community of blood, soil, and origin, there is opposed the *aristocratic* conception and tradition of race as a manifestation of a force of 'culture', a tradition that finds its natural crowning achievement in the Roman idea of *imperium*.

[8] 'The Doctrine of Fascism', p. 30.

What does the Spanish Falange Want?

(January 1937)

While everyone has followed the phases of the Spanish Civil War with lively interest, the ideas that animate the insurrection of the Spanish national forces against Communism are less well known, because many believe that the positive ideological phase in revolutions always develops at a later period.

This is not our opinion. We believe that the best soldier is the one who fights with precise knowledge of his cause and, even if the ideas are apprehended or intuited confusedly rather than clearly formulated, ideas are the primary reality in every really important historical upheaval. We are therefore grateful to Alberto Luchini[1] for having informed us about the doctrinal program of one of the principal Spanish nationalist tendencies, the so-called Spanish Falange.[2] He makes their terms lively and dynamic with the resources of a style of translation that is really amazing, and I might say worthy of a magician in its vigour, precision, and happy improvisation.[3] It deals with a general profession of political faith, whose formulation seems to be due to José Antonio Primo de Rivera[4] or the writer Giménez Caballero.[5] This program

[1] Dr Alberto Luchini was the head of the Race Bureau of the Ministry for Popular Culture, who collaborated with Evola on a magazine, Sangue e Spirito. Luchini also worked with Ezra Pound, assisting him in his translation of Confucius.

[2] The Falange was founded by José Antonio Primo de Rivera in 1933. In 1937, following the execution of Primo de Rivera during the Spanish Civil War, the leadership of the Falange passed to Francisco Franco, who unified the movement with other nationalist groups, stripping it of much of its fascist character.

[3] I Falangisti spagnoli (Florence: Beltrami, 1936). (Portions of Primo de Rivera's writings were translated into English in The Spanish Answer: Passages from the Spoken and Written Message of José Antonio Primo de Rivera [Madrid: Editorial Almena, 1964], reprinted as José Antonio Primo de Rivera: The Spanish Contribution to Political Thought [London: Black Front Press, 2013]).

[4] José Antonio Primo de Rivera (1903–1936) founded the Falange in 1933. In 1936, he was arrested and executed by the Spanish republican government.

[5] Ernesto Giménez Caballero (1899–1988) was a Spanish writer and film director who became an early supporter of the Falange, and sat on its council. He made attempts to wed Primo de Rivera's sister to Hitler, believing that this would 'soften' the Führer.

has almost flabbergasted us for its wealth of spiritual content, so much so that we believe it appropriate to bring it to the attention of the Italian public and relate its main points in synthesis.

First point. Neither linguistic unity, nor ethnic or territorial unity, are considered sufficient to give real content to the idea of the nation. 'A nation is a predestined, cosmic unity.' This is also affirmed as being true of Spain: a unity, a destiny, 'an entity subsisting beyond every person, class, or collectivity in which it is realised,' not only but moreover above 'the complex quantity that results from their aggregation'. We are dealing with the spiritual and transcendent idea of the nation, which is opposed to every form of collectivism — of the Right or the Left — and every mechanistic philosophy. 'As a true entity of its own perfect truth, a living and sovereign reality, Spain consequently tends toward its own definite goals.' In regard to this, there is not only talk of 'a return in full to worldwide spiritual collaboration', but even more of a 'universal mission of Spain', and of the creation, from the side of the 'solar unity' which it represents, 'of a new world'. Certainly, in regard to this last point, and good intentions apart, there remains a question mark.

What Spain could say, today or even tomorrow, in the place of a universal idea, is in fact very unclear. The reality, however, is that here there is the effect of a precise logic. It is not in fact possible to spiritually assume the idea of a nation without being instinctively led to surpass its particularism and conceive it as the principle of a super-national spiritual organisation, with the value therefore of universality, even when there may be very little at its disposal to give a concrete and effective form to such a demand. And vice versa: every particularist restriction of a national idea always leads to the emergence of a latent materialism or collectivism.

Let us pass to the more strictly political part of the program. Falangists say 'no' to the agnostic state, which is a passive spectator of the national public life or, at most, a police agent in the grand style. The state ought to be authoritarian, a state of everybody, total and totalitarian, justifying itself in this form, however, always with reference to the ideal and perpetual notion of Spain, independent of any class or party interest.

The extirpation of parties and their annex, the parliamentary gymnasium, follows naturally from this view. The Falangists, however, under the power of the centuries-old tradition of their fatherland, seem to also stand on guard against these excesses of totalitarianism that, in their work of levelling and uniformity, threaten to make of some nationalist tendencies nationalised facsimiles of Bolshevism. This is why Falangists insist on the necessity for organic human groups, alive and vital, to

articulate the true state and to be its solid foundations. They therefore intend to defend the integrity of the family, the basic cell of social unity; communal unity, the basic cell of territorial unity; and, finally, the professional and corporative unities, the basic cells of a new national organisation of work and organs for surpassing the class struggle.

In regard to this last point, the adherence of Falangists to the fascist corporative idea is complete. 'The union and corporative categories, up until now unable to participate in the national public life, will have to rise into immediate organs of the state, once the artificial barriers of Parliament and the political parties are beaten down.' The collectivity of producers as an organic and unified totality will understand themselves as 'totally interested in and committed to the common, unique, and outstanding endeavour', an endeavour in which first place must always remain assuredly given to the general national interest.

It is perhaps no accident that the chapter that follows right after this one deals with the human personality and denounces the danger that a nation might transform itself completely into a kind of 'experimental laboratory', as follows from the logical consequences of Bolshevism and mechanistic philosophy. The emphasis given to the dignity of the human personality, to be clearly distinguished from individualistic judgment, seems to us one of the most salient and characteristic traits of the program of the Spanish Falange. Let us cite what is significant on this topic: 'The Spanish Falange discerns in the human personality, beyond the physical individual and physiological individuality, the spiritual monad, the soul ordered to perpetual life, the instrument of absolute values that is an absolute value in itself.' From this vision comes the justification of a fundamental respect for 'the dignity of the human spirit, for the integrity and liberty of the person, a profound liberty legitimated from above, which can never be translated into the liberty to conspire against civil society and undermine its bases'. This declaration decisively overcomes one of the major dangers of the anti-Marxist counterrevolution: the danger, that is, of harming the spiritual values of the personality at the moment of justly striking the liberal and individualist error in its political and social seat.

It is hardly necessary to emphasise that by accepting these premises, Falangists repudiate every materialist interpretation of history, since they conceive of spirit as the origin of every truly decisive force. Their Catholic profession of faith is equally natural. The Catholic interpretation of life is, historically speaking, the only one that is 'Spanish'. Every labour of national reconstruction must refer to it. This does not mean a Spain that must again submit to the interferences, intrigues, and hegemony of

ecclesiastical power, but a new Spain, animated by that 'Catholic and universal sense' that has already led it 'against the alliance of ocean and barbarism to the conquest of unknown continents'; a Spain penetrated through and through with the religious forces of the spirit.

Falangists fight for these ideas as 'volunteer warriors' committed to 'conquer Spain for Spain'. These ideas, in their general line, seem to us perfectly 'in order'. They are clear and can have value as solid reference points. If they have really penetrated the Spanish national movement, we have two reasons to sincerely wish them a complete, rapid, and definitive victory: not only for the negative anti-Communist and anti-Bolshevik side, but even more for the positive which can follow in the totality of a new, hierarchical Europe, a Europe of nations and of personality.

The Spiritual Meaning of Autarchy

(1 March 1938)

In today's world it often happens that the force of circumstances and of those 'positive causes' which in many circles are valued so highly, seem to determine situations that appear to derive all their meaning from them, but that to a sharper eye are revealed to be susceptible to incarnating a higher value as well, and in so doing elevate themselves above the order of pure contingency.

We used the word 'susceptible' intentionally, since we wanted to indicate the character of 'possibility', and not of necessity, which belongs to this higher assumption. There are many cases in which destiny offers us something, without our noticing it and being able to take advantage of it. And in many other cases, in both individual and collective life, the force of things acts like a horse tamer, who, although he has real love for the horse, is compelled to whip it repeatedly, because the horse cannot understand him. The horse is diligently accomplishing all the elements of the exercise, but is always stopping at the last hurdle, which he could easily have jumped over with a small effort if he had understood. In an age in which the eye is hypnotically fastened to the material level, the level of 'positive reality', painful cases of this type occur with great frequency. People receive 'blows' from every direction, without succeeding in understanding and coming to the right orientation. The 'lessons of experience' serve to accumulate facts laboriously and organise them in different ways for our practical goals, but they do not serve to help us realise their *meaning*; they do not serve, that is, *to wake us up*and, once we are awake, to guide us to the right reaction.

The famous saying, 'the economy is our fate', is a sad sign of an epoch that, unfortunately, has not completely disappeared below the horizon. An obvious falsehood in every period of normal history and culture, this principle *became* true after man destroyed all the traditional values one after another, and all the higher reference points that used to preside over his decisions and actions. The ubiquity of the economy is the sign of an abdication, almost in the same way that the ubiquity of psychophysical automatism in hypnosis presupposes the suspension of the conscious faculties and, in general, of the personality.

Naturally, as a formula this principle is today obsolete, at least among the factions of the Right. 'Fascism', as Mussolini said, 'still believes in sanctity and heroism, that is to say in acts in which no economic motive, immediate or remote, operates'.[1] He refuses to admit that economic activities by themselves, to the exclusion of all other factors, suffice to explain all of history. Another well-known formula is that acknowledging the power of the economy must be joined to acknowledging that man is not its object, but its subject. All this is evident, intuitive, and natural. It is the opposing view that has all the characteristics of a real ideological anomaly.

So much for theory. In practice, unfortunately, things go rather differently, because 'the spirits you have evoked you will not easily dismiss', as Goethe noticed.[2] While on the one hand we cannot avoid rejecting the principles of the Idealist revival, on the other we often find ourselves compelled to deal with very precise practical necessities, and bearing them in mind is an equally sacred commitment for anyone who does not want to cut his own nation off from reality and lead it on short notice to ruin. In such a dualism, the more tragic side is its degenerating into an absolutely real antinomy. Sometimes people are compelled to shut up for the moment, or to delay the idea in the name of the needs of economic, financial, and commercial forces that are demanded by the most essential interests of the nation. Idea and reality do not always run in parallel lines in contemporary politics. This is a matter of indifference where the idea is a pure simulacrum, a mere myth, subordinate to Mammon, but it is very serious where we are dealing with a real idea.

Anyone who examines the developments of recent years can come to believe that *autarchy* is more than a principle; it is the necessary consequence of a definite general political and economic situation. For many people, this presently constitutes an authentic scandal and the height of irrationality, since rationality for them has been recognised in the 'division of labour' and trade with a sufficient margin of liberty and equality of tariffs. It is absurd, they say, to establish a system on principle according to which some people are compelled to excogitate every resource and to tighten their belts to live 'autarchically', and other people are instead amazed by their own wealth. From this we see a 'creature of necessity' in autarchy, determined by the violent and irrational intervention of politics in the economy.

[1] 'The Doctrine of Fascism', p. 36.

[2] 'Die ich rief, die Geister, Werd' ich nun nicht los.' From 'Der Zauberlehrling'.

The ease with which a similar view can be overturned by undoubtedly materialist traits is indeed surprising. We can wonder, therefore, if the opposite system is 'rational' and 'sensible', the system of the so-called free market, which amounts to the brute fact in which a certain larger economic power, based primarily on the control of raw materials by some people, establishes the iron links of a supine dependence of other people on the first group, precisely through the 'necessity' and 'rationality' of the 'normal' economic process. From a higher point of view, this is the most repugnant of these illogicalities, and an uglier yoke than any tyranny directed at the individual.

People today who refuse to be caught in the gears of such machinery, and who have chosen autarchy for a principle, are people who have awakened to something spiritual, people who have shown that they possess sensibility for values that are not reducible to those of the stomach and those annexed to it: this is already the principle of a liberation. If they have been brought here by necessity (and by necessity we ought to include everything that refers to a realistic politics alone), we ought to acknowledge that necessity, in this case, has had exactly this providential function, to which we referred at the beginning, and that a single step suffices, with the right reaction, to raise oneself to an effectively spiritual consciousness.

Etymologically, autarchy means a person 'has his own first principle in himself'. The only free man — the ancients used to say — is one who has his own first principle in himself. The entire question turns on the meaning of this freedom. The current interpretations are well known: they are found in the financial field on the one hand and the military field on the other. Economic autarchy guarantees us a margin of liberty concerning the politics of currency; it allows us to regulate and defend our money. Secondly, economic autarchy is a necessary premise for modern war. Without economic independence, the conduct of a modern war is seriously prejudiced; it is reduced to something like a game of chance that either succeeds on the spot (that is, on short notice) or leads to ruin, since the technical and military machinery of a modern war cannot be nourished on its own, even without mentioning the possibility of a blockade.

These are two excellent reasons, but the third, which to our way of thinking is the most important one, is forgotten. Autarchy has the value of a principle, in the highest sense of the term, because it is the *conditio sine qua non*[3] for a liberty of alliances and hostilities on a basis that is not materialist (pragmatic) but ethical. In fact

[3] Latin: the essential conditions for something.

it is evident that the greater the degree to which a nation will succeed in establishing itself as economically autarchic, the greater will be its capacity to follow an idea, if not finally an ideal, in its complete foreign politics; in other words, the greater will be its capacity to choose friends and enemies independently of crude opportunity and brute necessity. Autarchic nations would be the only ones in a condition to form alliances justified by true principles, by ideal and spiritual affinities, instead of a pure and changeable juncture of interests. The one thing, certainly, does not exclude the other, and the ideal condition undoubtedly exists when it results from the conjunction of the two levels. The case of an imperfect conjunction is exemplified by the dark epoch of materialism and economism, from which we are only now escaping, and which was characterised by a cynical, cold, and ready subordination of the idea to self-interest. The new epoch, if it does not betray itself, and if it should really deserve to be called new, will be characterised by the opposite principle, that is, by an active decision of nations and by a decision from above, on the basis of these possibilities of independence and mobility, which proceed from the highest level of autarchy sensibly realisable in each of them.

The day it reaches this level, the positive side of autarchy will appear clearly. Even if this principle has at first been imposed mostly from outside, and demanded of us force and discipline, the new attitude will allow us to judge affairs from a very different point of view: coercion on the part of 'history' will be understood as the only means available to give a higher instinct that is not yet conscious of itself a first sense of the right direction.

Legionary Asceticism: Colloquium with the Head of the Iron Guard

(22 March 1938)

Our car is speeding away from that curiosity that is downtown Bucharest: a collection of small skyscrapers and modern buildings, mostly of the 'functionalist' type, with exhibits and department stores halfway between Parisian and American in style. The only exotic element is the astrakhan caps which are frequently worn by the police and businessmen. We reach the northern station and drive down a dusty provincial road bordered by little buildings reminiscent of old Vienna. Heading along a straight line, the road reaches the country. After a full half-hour, the car unexpectedly swerves to the left, takes a country road, and then stops in front of a virtually isolated building surrounded by fields. It is the so-called 'Green House', the home of the Captain of the Rumanian 'Iron Guard'.

'We built it with our own hands', the legionnaires accompanying us say with a certain pride. Intellectuals and artisans worked together to build the residence of their leader, almost with the significance of a symbol and a rite. The style of architecture is Rumanian. On each side there is a long portico that almost gives the impression of a cloister.

We enter and walk up to the second floor. We are met by a tall, slim young man in a sports suit with an open face, which immediately gives an impression of nobility, power, and loyalty. This is Corneliu Codreanu, Captain of the Iron Guard. His type is characteristically Aryan-Roman — he seems like a figure from the ancient Aryan, Italian world. While his grey-blue eyes express the hardness and cold will that belong to leaders, in the totality of his expression there is at the same time a singular note of idealism, self-possession, power, and human understanding. His way of conversing reflects these characteristics. Before answering questions, he seems to become self-absorbed and detached, then, suddenly, he starts talking, expressing himself with an almost geometrical precision in well-articulated and natural phrases.

'After a horde of journalists of every nation and colour who are only capable of asking me questions about the politics of the moment, your visit is the first time — I say this with satisfaction — that someone visits me who is interested, first of all, in the soul and the spiritual nucleus of our movement', Codreanu says. 'For the other journalists I have discovered a formula that satisfies them and means almost nothing: *constructive nationalism*.

'A man is composed of an organism, that is, an organised form, then of vital forces, and then of a soul. The same can be said about a people. The national construction of a state, although it naturally includes all three elements, for reasons of various qualifications and heredity, can be inspired especially by one of these particulars.

'In my opinion, in the fascist movement, the element of the state is predominant, and is the equivalent of the organised form. The source is the formative power of ancient Rome, mistress of justice and political organisation, of which the Italian is the purest heir. In National Socialism the emphasis is on what connects to the vital forces: race, the instinct of race, and the ethnic and national element. In the Rumanian legionary movement, the accent falls especially on what corresponds to the element of soul in an organism, or the spiritual and religious aspect.

'This is the source of the distinctive trait of the various national movements, although in the end they contain all three elements and neglect none of them. The specific character of our movement comes to us from a remote heredity. Already Herodotus called our progenitors, "the immortal Dacians". Our Getic and Thracian ancestors had a faith, already before Christianity, in the immortality and indestructability of the soul, which proves their orientation towards spirituality. The Roman colonisation added the Roman spirit of organisation and form to this element. All the successive centuries have made our people wretched and broken into pieces. However, just as even in a sick and ill-tempered horse one can recognise its thoroughbred nobility of race, so even in what it has become yesterday and today, the Rumanian people can recognise the latent elements of this double legacy.

'And it is this legacy that the legionary movement wants to awaken', Codreanu continues. 'It comes from the spirit. It wants to create a spiritually new man. When this task has been realized in the "movement", we await the awakening of the second legacy, that is, the politically formative Roman power. So spirit and religion are for us the starting point. "Constructive nationalism" is the destination and almost the consequence. Connecting the two points is the mission of the ascetic, and at the same time heroic, ethics of the "Iron Guard".'

We ask Codreanu about the relation of the spirituality of his movement to the Orthodox Christian religion. He answers:

'In general we aim to resurrect, in the form of a national consciousness and a lived experience, what has often been mummified and become the traditionalism of a somnolent clerisy in this religion. We find ourselves in a fortunate condition, because the dualism between faith and politics is foreign to our religion, which is articulated nationally and so can furnish us with ethical and religious elements without imposing itself as a merely political entity. The Iron Guard movement takes a fundamental idea from our religion: that of *ecumenicity*. This means the overcoming of every abstract and rationalistic internationalism and universalism. The ecumenical idea is that of *societas* as a unity of life and a living organism, living together not only with our people but also with our dead and with God. Realising such an idea in the form of an effective experience is the centre of our movement. Politics, party, culture, and so on are only the consequences and derivations of this idea. We must bring this central reality back to life and so in this way reinvent Rumanian man, so that we can then proceed to likewise construct the nation and the state. An important point is that the presence of the dead in the ecumenical nation for us is not abstract, but real. We cannot separate ourselves from the presence of our dead and especially our heroes. As forces liberated from the human condition, they penetrate and sustain our highest life. The legionnaires meet periodically in little groups, called "nests". These meetings follow special rites. Every meeting begins with the call to all our fallen comrades, and those present respond with "present!" For us this rite is not just a ceremony and allegory, but a real evocation.

'We distinguish individual, the nation, and transcendent spirituality', Codreanu continues. 'In heroic dedication we consider what leads from one to the other of these elements, all the way to a higher unity. We deny every form of the principle of brute materialist utility, both on the individual level and also on the nation's. Beyond the nation we acknowledge eternal and immutable principles, in the name of which we should be ready to fight, to die, and to subordinate everything with at least the same determination as in the name of our right to live and defend our life. Truth and honour, for instance, are metaphysical principles, which we place much higher than our nation.'

We learned that the ascetic character of the Iron Guard movement is not generic, but concrete and, so to speak, observant. For instance, there is a fasting rule. Three days a week, about 800,000 men practice the so-called 'black fast', that is, abstention from every form of food, drink, and tobacco. Prayer plays an equally important role

in the movement. More than this, there is a rule of celibacy for the select Assault Corps that bears the name of the two legionary leaders fallen in Spain, Mota and Marin.[1] We ask Codreanu to tell us the precise meaning of all this. He seems to concentrate a moment and then answers:

'There are two aspects. To explain them we need to bear in mind the dualism of the human being, composed of a material, naturalistic element and a spiritual one. When the first dominates the second, this is "Hell". Every equilibrium between the two is precarious and contingent. Only the absolute dominion of the spirit over the body is the normal condition and presupposition of every true force and every true heroism. We practice fasting because it favours this condition, it loosens the bonds of the body, and it favours the self-liberation and self-affirmation of the pure will. When we add prayer to fasting, we ask that powers from above unite with ours and sustain us invisibly. This leads to the second aspect. It is a superstition to think that in every combat, only material and simply human forces are decisive. No! In combat there are also invisible and spiritual forces in play which are at least as effective as the bodily ones. We are aware of the effectiveness and importance of these forces. This is why we give a precise ascetic character to the legionary movement. The principle of chastity was also in force in the ancient chivalric orders. I emphasise, however, that with us it is restricted to the Assault Corps, a restriction based on a practical rationale, which is that for men who must devote themselves completely to combat and not fear death, it is just as well that they do not have the impediments of a family. Anyhow, men stay in this Corps only until the end of their thirtieth year. In any case, however, there still remains a commitment to principle. There are, on the one hand, men who acknowledge only "life" and therefore seek only prosperity, wealth, affluence, and opulence. On the other hand, there are men who aspire to something more than life, to glory and victory in a struggle that takes place within and without. The Iron Guard belong to this second group. Their warrior asceticism is completed with a second norm: a vow of poverty to which the elite of the movement's heads are pledged. They are called to renounce luxury, empty amusement, and so-called worldly distractions; in a word, an invitation to a true change of life that we extend to every legionnaire.'

[1] Legionaries Ion Mota and Vasile Marin went to Spain in 1936 to fight for Franco's nationalists in the Spanish Civil War. They were both killed in battle in January 1937.

Corporation and Roman Fidelity

(April–May 1938)

It is curious that a nation in tune with a sane synthesis between renovation and tradition, like Fascist Italy, should have greeted the new German legislation concerning work with comments that frequently demonstrate a rather singular uncertainty of principles. This is the case, for instance, with old criticisms regarding the Nazi rules for labour. They resort to commonplaces, which we thought were long since relegated to the junkyards, derived from positivism and illuminist rationalism, denouncing this law as displaying a 'feudal' and 'medieval' mentality, accusing it of a repudiation of the 'successes won by the proletariat in a century of socialist struggles', and so on.

Naturally, for every sensible person, all this is immediately turned upside down into praise, and compels us to emphasise what is positive and 'traditional' in the new system from our point of view. And we can really speak of 'traditional'. In fact, those who attack the German corporative conception fail to notice that they are attacking their own spirit at the same time, not only in our common medieval tradition, but also the Roman corporative conception beyond this, in the name of ideological remnants that are creatures of modern decadence.

The new German labour law intends to reconstruct that productive solidarity which has been damaged by the Marxist ideology of class struggle, by scompletely suppressing that ideology and equally leaping over the union experience, both class-based and egalitarian, while harking back, *in primis et ante omnia*, to a Germanic ethical principle: the principle of fidelity and its counterpart, the principle of honour. The proprietor of the business is the head (literally, *Duce*, *Führer*), the blue and white collar workers are his followers (*Gefolgschaft*). Between the two is an advisory general staff: the 'council of trust' (*Vertrauungsrat*). There is no collective contract and no general corpus of corporative and union statutes on labour relations. The understanding is direct and occurs, case by case, between people, and before people within individual productive businesses. When the commitment of fidelity is violated, recourse is left to state labour trustees and the '*Honour Courts*'.

Semi-autarchic, ethically purified and reinforced, with an almost military structure, the individual businesses therefore absorb the economic momentum of the

nation. They are not confused with the state, which, even while controlling them, remains on a level that is essentially superior to that of the economy.

The real merit of the initiative expressed by this new legislation is the resumption of the spirit of the best aspects of the Middle Ages, while rejecting — even if not yet radically — the prevarications, contaminations, and material reforms occurring in the economy of the plebs and the bourgeois coalitions.

The affirmation of the primacy of a spiritual and personalised principle — the principle of fidelity — in respect to every utilitarian, collectivist, and abstract relationship, has always characterised traditional organisations and, in particular, traditional corporations. The honour of one's own corporation, the pride in exercising the activity appropriate to it and the almost military solidarity, which is felt and willed, and for which the workman appears almost as a soldier, and the boss as an officer, in an enterprise to which both are committed, constitute the solid but immaterial bases of the professional unities of the Middle Ages.

For what concerns the ancient Roman culture, the time and cult of a particular divinity or 'hero' was the real centre, from which the unity and real life of the professional corporations began. Their constitution reproduced the virile and military constitution that belonged to the *gens*[1] and the patrician family. The mass of *sodales*[2] was called *populus*[3] and *ordo*[4] and was divided into centuries and decuries,[5] like the army and the people in solemn assemblies. Every century of the corporation had its own head, or centurion, and a lieutenant, *optio*, as in the legions. To be distinguished from the heads, the other members bore the name of *caligati* or *milites caligati*, as simple soldiers. The *magister*, in addition to being the technical director of the Roman corporations and the priest of its sacred fire, was also the administrator of justice and the guardian of the customs and norms of the association.

This discussion leads us to talk about the principle of fidelity in general. It is just as well to remind people who believe they are seeing an especially German patrimony

[1] Gens is Latin for clan. In ancient Roman society, members of a gens believed that they shared common ancestry. They were both patriarchal and patrilineal. In the Roman method of naming, an individual's second name was his gens.

[2] The plural form of sodalitas, which was a voluntary association.

[3] 'People'.

[4] 'Order'.

[5] In civilian life, a century was a group of one hundred men who, collectively, had one vote in the Roman Assembly; in the military, it was a unit of one hundred (sometimes fewer) men under the command of a Centurion. A decury consisted of ten men led by a decurio.

in this that in Rome this principle had such power that, personified in the figure of a goddess, *fides* was the object of one of the most ancient and lively cults. *Fides romana* — as it was called in prehistoric times — *alma fides*, *fides sancta*,*sacra*, *casta*, *incorrupta* — these were the later names. According to Livy, *fides* characterised the Roman in front of the 'barbarian' by opposing the law of unconditioned adherence to the sworn pact against the contingency of those who take unstable 'fortune' as their norm. The power of this law among the ancients was very great. Servius[6] comments, *magna erat apud maiores cura Fidei*.[7] Cicero warns prophetically that with the fall of *fides*, *virtus* too falls: the custom, the inner dignity, and the people's force of greatness, This is why *fides* could have its own symbolic temple at Rome — *aedes fidei populi romani*[8] — at the royal peak of the city, the Capitol, next to the temple of the greatest god, Jupiter. This closeness holds a profound significance. As Zeus for the Hellenes, Mithra for the Iranians, and Indra for the Indians, so Jupiter — the Roman representation of a similar metaphysical principle — was the god of oaths and loyalty at Rome. As god of the bright sky, *Lucetius*, he was also the god of sworn covenants and of interior commitments that are virile, loyal, clear, and explicit. They talked of *Jovis fiducia*, so that *fides* received a religious chrism for the Roman.

Fides did not remain at the level of a generic ethical principle. It was enhanced according to a political and heroic significance correlative to the enhancing of the Roman reality itself. This is why the Senate could appear as a living temple of fidelity — *fidei templum* — that would gather around the goddess' temple on the Capitol at times. This is why the most typical emblem for *fides* was the standard and eagle of the legions, and fidelity could take the absolute form of the warriors' fidelity before the Emperor — *fides equitum*, *fides militum*.[9] Fidelity, victory, and even immortal life then appeared as concepts connected by a mysterious link. The most complete and suggestive synthesis concerning this, under the title of *fides militum*, was given by a picture of the imperial epoch, where *fides*, personified and divinised, carries, among other things, a statue of victory and a globe topped by a phoenix, that is, the animal that symbolises resurrection, while on the other side there is an emperor sacrificing

[6] Maurus Servius Honoratus was a grammarian from the fourth and fifth centuries who is most noted for his commentaries on Virgil.

[7] Latin: 'Our ancestors had great concern for Good Faith.'

[8] Latin: 'The Temple of the Good Faith of the Roman People'.

[9] Latin: 'the fidelity of the knights, the fidelity of the soldiers'.

to Jupiter and being crowned by Victory. In these symbols there is a truly prodigious intensity of meaning.

A similar tradition was revived with new energy in our Middle Ages. *Fides*, *Treue*, trust are mottos characteristic of this period and are applied to the corporative field, the feudal field, and to the relations of the individual political entities with the super-political authority of the Holy Roman Empire. Ancient Roman ethics here meets and is enhanced by a corresponding ethics that was already living in Nordic blood. 'Fidelity is stronger than fire' is the formula in the *Nibelungenlied* that consecrates a tragic affair where the commitment of the warrior's fidelity imposes itself irresistibly beyond that of blood or of life itself.

Granted this, it is a matter of undeniable value that today we are seeking to put these kinds of principles back, front and centre, in order to make a life less materialistic which has been 'socialised' and depersonalised, and even to animate and cure the dark affair that are material activities and of the economy in general.

For people who respond with the formula of 'anachronism' and have their hearts set on 'the triumphs of the proletariat' of socialist memory, today there are beautiful lands available apart from those of our tradition, where these 'triumphs' are preserved under the sign of the hammer and sickle, claimed and fully developed. Today we are particularly aware that restoring the Roman and German tradition of 'fidelity' to its full force — on every level — is a fundamental point of every action of restoration.

Fidelity is what cannot be bought or sold. It obeys a law and attaches itself to a necessity. Convenience can be calculated, but *fides* can only be established by the spontaneous act of a man who is capable of inner nobility.

Fides means *personality and hierarchy*. It is the true overcoming of everything that is anodyne service, mechanical order, vile conformism, routine, superstructure, and even violence. It contains a vivifying power of virile spirituality, a roman and fascist force. When it disappears, the tension of every organisation, every law, and every institution becomes a creature deprived of inner support, which will collapse at the first blow.

Party or Order?

(2 January 1940)

We have recently read some interesting considerations regarding the concept of 'party', which, in our opinion, deserve to be noticed and discussed because of their importance. This is especially true just now, when the amendments introduced by the Grand Council to the Fascist Party's constitution demonstrate that they are far from wanting to rest on the *status quo,* and instead that there is a lively need to revise the existing order and make it increasingly coherent in relation to the spirit from which it arose. In fact, Roberto Farinacci has emphasised that these amendments, 'although they might appear to be a retreat at first glance, are in reality an expansion and strengthening'. The cornerstone of every organisation is established by the principle of greatest spiritual centralisation and the greatest administrative decentralisation. This very principle is the animating spirit behind the recent reform. Through it, the Fascist Party is going to adjust itself more consistently with its mission, 'which is to be the lively animator and disciplining energy of everything and everybody. For this, it is necessary that this energy not be dissipated and nearly submerged in the vast network of numerous organisations, but concentrated in itself, ready for and capable of any action'.

Today there is, therefore, a reconfirmation of the cure which accentuates those aspects of the Party by means of which they constitute a type of soul — speaking like an Aristotelian, we could say, a type of *entelechia*, the formative and animating vital principle — for the new state. What further developments are theoretically conceivable in such a direction?

The first aspect we want to treat is connected to a question that, superficially considered, might seem to be merely one of names. We are dealing with the designation of 'party', a term which originated from the world of parliamentary democracy and has become absolutely self-contradictory where there is a single party that has assumed the authority of the state and has declared every other party illegal. It is curious that in the eighteen years of the new regime, no one has ever thought to propose the substitution of this word with an original term that fits reality better. A different designation would fit the functions and effective significance of the Fascist Party more effectively: that of Order. For this designation we do not refer to the

communities of a properly religious or monastic type, but especially to the ancient chivalric organisations. The idea of Order will then correspond to that of an elite and a voluntary formation with 'ascetic' and militant traits, which essentially defends an idea preserving principles and a tradition, and works to support a given community of persons, who are more numerous, but less qualified, more dedicated to particular and contingent interests, and less penetrated by a sentiment of high political and ethical responsibility.

In reality, a name like, for example, the *Fascist Order of the Italian Empire* would not be inferior in dignity to the present name, 'National Fascist Party', and as symbol, myth, or force-idea, the substitution would be advantageous. With the new name, the old order of ideas of demo-liberal party government would be definitively excluded as even the echo of a name, and it would be a manifestation of the same tendency that has led logically to the recent suppression of the names 'parliament' and 'deputy'.

This 'liturgy of power', which plays a far from negligible role in every authoritarian and traditional political order, would receive a precise and significant advancement by moving from Party to Order. The new name would always bring to mind the task of defending the Party from every bureaucratisation and against the return of bourgeois elements, always emphasising the 'sacred' side of the commitment that it assumes. This would serve to give a mediating role to its oath so that its members would have no other alternative besides fidelity or treason in respect to the principles of its own internal forum, which would be superior to, rather than answerable to, any external authority or control. If there is a power hidden in every word, as in the ancient view, we have no doubt that the designation of 'order' would be the most appropriate one to evoke the necessary forces for the highest revolutionary vocation and for a definitive abolition of the so-called 'modern' conception of the state; that is, the state as a rationalistic, mechanical, and agnostic entity, like the 'rule of law' or the 'police state' or the 'economic state' of earlier ideologies.

If we analyse the processes that have contributed the most to the crisis of modern society and civilisation, we find first of all the separation of spiritual authority from temporal power, or the political element. This separation has been followed by a real inversion. In the course of drawing its highest significance and real legitimacy from reference to a spiritual reality, the political element has positioned itself as *ultima ratio*[1] and had tried to subordinate the spiritual authority to itself,

[1] Latin: 'the fidelity of the knights, the fidelity of the soldiers'.

while offering none but 'realistic' motives of utility or opportunism as the basis for its right and new pretensions — at most a brute will to power. We need to be very conscious that it is impossible to speak seriously of a revival or reconstruction before restoring the hierarchical values that belong to every normal and traditional order. This vocation is contained in the highest potentialities of the Fascist revolution. The starting point of the new Fascist political idea is neither an abstractly juridical principle nor a material reality, but rather a new worldview that is suffused with spiritual meanings. Right after worldview there comes the ideal of a given human type, the ideal of 'Mussolini's man' understood in these terms so that it can be the basis and reference point for the formation of a new kind of 'race of the spirit', with its own very precise countenance and 'style'. In third place comes Fascism as life and concrete actualisation of the aforesaid general consideration and human ideal in a precise organisation, which in these terms, in the logic of a restorative process so conceived, will have less the traits of the 'Party' than those of an Order. In the Party as Fascist Order of the Italian Empire the new, spiritually revolutionary idea would be incarnated, the evocation of the deepest forces of the race will be consummated, a 'tradition' will be preserved and transmitted, and there will be the definitive achievement of the type of a virile, implacable organisation. This organisation will be formed less from 'men of a party' and simple 'card-carrying' Party members, adherents of a given political programme for reasons of opportunism and utility, but rather by spirits united in a unique vocation with spiritual traits, more sacred than profane, and by a life rigidly inspired by ethical principles and motives that are more than individual.

This appears to us to be the context of a Fascist revolutionary radicalism, a complete political transformation, a definitive coherent alignment of forces, and values according to which Mussolini's Italy is and can always continue to be at the head of every possible movement of reconstruction in the West.

The Spiritual Bases of the Japanese Imperial Idea

(November–December 1940)

The signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact (6 November 1937) and the Tripartite Pact (27 September 1940) by Italy, Germany, and Japan provided occasions to emphasise the common political interests they presupposed. Almost no one, however, thought to discuss them from the perspective of worldview, spirituality, or traditional principles in order to see to what extent there was also a certain convergence here. On the contrary, to most people this assumption seemed absurd. Most people consider Japan another world, which will always remain closed to our mentality. People believe that its state and its tradition are the result of a mentality that no bridge can connect to Western man's way of thinking. To a large extent this is a mistake. It is an opinion that can be true only from an empiricist viewpoint, the viewpoint of people who believe that nothing exists beyond what is conditioned by the naturalistic element, whether geographic, ethnic, or racist in the narrow sense. Wherever there exists a 'traditional' culture in the highest sense of this term, there is always something superior to all this, something potentially universal, which in its diverse elements reveals the different expressions of a unique content. Japan is among the most traditional cultures that still exist. If a lack of understanding exists between some Western cultures and the Japanese, the cause does not proceed so much from a difference of race as from the fact that the latter — the Western cultures — find themselves outside of Tradition, that is, they are the product of a 'profane' and anti-traditional spirit, a situation which puts them in opposition not only to Eastern cultures, but also to every normal and higher culture of our own Western past.

It is in fact essential to acknowledge that, even if it does so in forms appropriate for a different race and environment, Japan still firmly defends values today that the West, in the contingencies of its history, has lost and can only hope to regain in future developments stemming from restorative revolutions. On this terrain there can well be a convergence. By representing an open challenge to every 'evolved' and 'modern' political ideology, by holding firmly to transcendent and anti-secular significance, even in the political and governmental order, Japan can in a certain way work for us

as a type of reagent, can help us to overcome compromises imposed by necessity, and can spur our spiritual courage, and point out to us new paths to the summit. Similarly, we find it useful to hint at the Japanese political idea, which is only superficially known to most people.

The political and national ideal of Japan — *Ymato damashii* — can be summed up in calling the imperial tradition 'divine'. 'Following the command, I shall descend from heaven', the patriarch of the Japanese sovereigns says in the *Ko-ji-ki*, the chief text of Japanese tradition. These sovereigns are not considered human beings. They form a unity with the solar goddess Amaterasu Omikami, on the basis of an archaic and uninterrupted dynastic and spiritual tradition, but even historically the Japanese dynasty has a continuity of over two thousand years. Here the act of governing and ruling is united with cult. It is at one and the same time a rite, a religious act. The word *matsurigoto* means both government in the strict sense, that is, temporal power, and cult, the 'exercise of religious things'. This ambiguity is full of significance, because it refers to the unbreakable synthesis between spiritual authority and temporal power in a single person, a synthesis that belongs to all primordial traditional cultures, including Rome.

Japan is therefore the only contemporary state that finds itself in the happy condition of knowing nothing of the problem of the reconciliation between the national and racial idea and the religious idea. In Japan, religion is politics and politics is religion. The Japanese religion, Shintoism, has *ciughi* as its cornerstone — that is, absolute fidelity to the Emperor, the exact equivalent of what was *fides* in the Roman and Germanic Ghibelline Middle Ages and to a certain degree in ancient Rome. The religious duty is also dissolved into fidelity before the state, because in Japan the state is not a human creation, but has a divine basis and at its centre there is a being that is more than a man, even if — as the texts inform us — it does not have the character of an absolute God of the monotheistic type.

Since this is the only reference point for the piety of the individual, the result is that every virtue or act of this individual or collective life ends with justifying itself in terms of *fides*, transcendent fidelity to the Chief: *ciughi*. Fidelity and loyalty in Japan are therefore concepts that are valid not only in the warrior and chivalric sphere, but include respect for parents, solidarity between relatives or friends, the practice of virtue, respect for the laws, harmony between spouses with a proper hierarchical relationship between the sexes, productivity in the field of industry and the economy, work and study, the task of forming one's own character, and the defence of blood and race. All this is 'fidelity' and, in the last instance, fidelity before

the Sovereign. Every antisocial, immoral, and criminal act on this basis does not signify the transgression of an abstract norm, a more or less anodyne or conventional 'social' law. No! It is treason, disloyalty, and ignominy comparable to what rebounds on a warrior who deserts his post or betrays the commitment covenanted by him in a manly fashion with his chief. They are therefore not 'criminals', but rather 'traitors', beings incapable of honour.

It is interesting to notice that this kind of view, which is still alive and well in Japan, reflects what every other traditional culture, of East and West, originally knew, but then lost. It is now reappearing again in Fascism and National Socialism. In these movements, too, there is a growing tendency to give a basis that is ethical and virile, and therefore anti-positivist, to the notion of the rule of law, of social morality, and moreover of liability and responsibility. However, unlike Japan, in our country we do not have the supreme, religious reference point, which is established in Japanese tradition through the supernatural character of the imperial function.

The Japanese sovereign possesses this character, even more than for his descent, which is considered non-human and, as we mentioned, reaches back to prehistoric epochs, and also because of the 'Triple Treasure — *Sanshu no Jingi* — emblems of divine power: mirror, pearl, and sword. There is no coronation or investiture ceremony in Japan. The new sovereign becomes Emperor when he assumes the Triple Treasure, an act that marks and seals his right from above. The traditions that refer to this are so ancient that their original meaning survives only in a fragmentary and unclear form, even in Japan itself. What should we really think, for instance, about the relationship that exists between the sovereign and the female divinity of the Sun? It is not easy to deal here with a problem like this one, which, anyhow, we have already discussed elsewhere. We shall only say that the physical Sun functions here as a symbol for a spiritual reality by means of a transcendent 'solarity'. The fact that this force is conceived of as being female could probably be explained like many heroic myths, where symbolic women, queens, or female divinities play a significant role and lead beings who are especially gifted and tested to the regal function. This symbolism means that, in respect to spiritual, celestial, and 'solar' power, the sovereign, by assuming this function and maintaining himself also as a 'man', has to preserve the affirmative and supremely royal quality that man has before woman in every normal relationship. This is precisely the opposite of the Semitic attitude of servility before the divine.

The relationship of 'identity', moreover, is emphasised by the first object of the imperial Triple Treasure, the mirror, which is called *Yata no Kagami*, that is, august

spirit. There is a 'solar' force in this as in a magic 'presence'. Therefore the mirror invites the sovereign to acknowledge his true image, that is, to be always aware of his identity in relation to the solar force.

There are two aspects to consider about the second symbol, the sword. The first, exoteric one, corresponds more or less to the meaning that the sword has had everywhere as an emblem of the temporal power. Moreover, in Japan it is a reference to the ability to discriminate between good and evil, real and unreal, so as to be able to be a just judge on Earth. Nonetheless, the second aspect of the symbolism in question — a more secret and esoteric aspect — will give a sort of metaphysical foundation to this ability. The myth in fact says that the sword was originally brandished to 'kill the dragon with eight heads' of the brother of the solar goddess. We cannot deal here with the symbolism of this event and of the number 'eight' that occurs therein. We shall only say that again, there is a reference to a supernatural achievement, which presupposes the destruction of lower, 'telluric' influences on different levels of conditioned existence.

As for the symbol of the stone, or pearl of stone, *tama*, from the outer viewpoint it refers to Buddhism, which knows the mystic pearl of 'compassion', in the highest sense of understanding, of human sentiment, of greatness and openness of mind — in Sanskrit, *mahâtmâ*. The Japanese word *tama*, however, also means 'soul' or 'divinity', and the symbolism of the 'celestial stone' effectively takes us rather far back in time. The Grail itself in Wolfram von Eschenbach's text appears as a divine or celestial stone — *lapis ex coelo* — closely connected to the idea of transcendent kingdom, while the ancient English tradition knows the so-called 'stone of destiny' — *Lia Fáil* — which has played a part in the consecration of legitimate kings since prehistoric times. We could easily find many more similar references. In general a sacred stone appears everywhere a centre is established of a 'traditional' organisation in the higher sense, that is, almost in the sense of a 'world centre'. We can recall the *omphalos* of Delphi and even the papal allegory of Peter as 'rock' (*pietra*) in the Gospels.

As we said, the transcendent nature of sovereignty, marked with these symbols of the triple treasure, constitutes the cornerstone of the entire Japanese doctrine of Empire and is still valid as dogma. These words are part of the commentary of Prince Ito Hirobumi[1] on the Japanese constitution: 'The sacred throne was created when the

[1] Prince Ito Hirobumi (1841–1909) was a samurai and also served as Prime Minister of Japan on four occasions. He spent 18 months studying the constitutional systems of Europe, accepting and rejecting some of their ideas for Japan, and was instrumental in the creation of the Meiji Constitution, which

Earth parted from the sky (i.e., as a sort of surrogate for the degeneration of an existing primordial unity of the terrestrial and the divine). The sovereign descends from heaven and is divine and sacred.' In the official text *Kokutai no Hongi* that was recently published (1937) by the Japanese Ministry of National Education,[2] the same idea is found, but in a yet more radical formulation. We shall report some points in Marenga's translation: 'The sovereigns of Japan descend from a solar goddess. Japan has always been ruled by a single dynasty. It is a unique country in the world, without peers. The goddess is present in the imperial mirror of the temple of Ise.[3] The three symbols of power have been delivered by the goddess. The rule of the empire is divine. The sovereigns are visible divinities. They are different from the rulers of any other nation, because they are not chosen by the people. The act of governing the nation is identical to that of paying homage to the gods according to the Shinto rites. The sovereign is the people. They are the same thing. Loyalty to the sovereign is the basis of all morality.' All this is the official ideology of the state; it is the basis of the particular national sentiment; it is the foundation of the ideals and virtues of every Japanese; it is the weapon used to fight materialism, individualism, collectivism, and especially Bolshevism, which is correctly considered as the extreme antithesis of the Japanese political idea. It is the deep source of every heroic act and every sacrifice; it is the faith, the soul of the Yamato[4] race. In 1935, Professor Minobe made himself leader of an attempt at 'Enlightenment' reform. He wanted to make of the throne a simple branch of the government, and therefore to 'constitutionalise' and 'positivise' the institution of the monarchy. This unleashed a most violent reaction in the soul of the Japanese and especially in the army.[5] The divine nature and origin of the sovereign was once again solemnly affirmed.

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restored direct power to the Emperor at the same time that it established many democratic institutions. He was assassinated by a Korean nationalist.

[2] Kokutai no Hongi: Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949).

[3] The Grand Shrine at Ise is a temple complex which is one of the most important in Shintoism, and is of great importance to the Japanese imperial family, which is responsible for its maintenance.

[4] Yamato is the ancient name for the largest ethnic group of native Japanese.

[5] Tatsukichi Minobe (1873–1948) was a law professor who specialised in constitutional law. Although his interpretations were widely accepted, including by the Emperor himself, for many years, by 1935 he was accused of being a traitor by those military officers and nationalists who wished to see the Emperor vested with absolute power. He was forced to resign and his works were discredited and banned. After the war, however, he participated in the creation of Japan's new constitution.

The principle according to which the sovereign is the people has an almost racial basis. The dynasty is considered as the original stock from which arise or derive the principal lines of the Japanese race. Thus, the nation is conceived as a single large family or *gens*[6] in the ancient sense. This myth cements the pride and solidarity that racism seeks to arouse in us today, since it gives an almost patriarchal hue to Japanese loyalty. Loyalty on this foundation is almost *pietas*;[7] it is not exhausted in the free act of the individual, it is a duty of the blood. Naturally, this sentiment is especially alive among the elements closest to the imperial summit, that is, in the *bushi* or *samurai*, who constitute the warrior or feudal class, conceived as the flower of Japanese society according to the ancient proverb: 'What the cherry is among blossoms, so is the *bushi* among men.' The organisation of the *samurai* or *bushi* into a true caste, in which the traits, between ascetic and military, of our ancient chivalric orders are precisely reflected, dates back to about 1,500 years ago. The doctrine that is their soul and law, the *bushido*, is, however, rather older, and harmonises with the idea of the Japanese state. As the foundation of precise ethical, social, spiritual, and even biological norms, it has been faithfully handed down from generation to generation to our own days. This caste is the jealous guardian of the tradition. Just as it is loyal unto death to the sovereign, it is equally so to the dogma of divine regality, which, today as in centuries past, it is ready to defend against any profanation and secularisation.

The doctrine of *bushido*, like the doctrine of the old Western chivalry, does not concern only the profession of arms (and so it would be a mistake to consider the *samurai* as a simple 'military caste'), but involves the entire tenor of life. It is way of being that essentially corresponds to a race of the spirit, beyond a race of blood. Aside from the supreme norm of loyalty, stronger than life or death, *bushido* contains the formation of the warrior, but in a special sense, which is hardly accessible to the contemporary European mentality, which easily confuses the warrior with the soldier and always associates it with the idea of something hard, rigid, and closed. An essential element of the 'way of the *bushi*', however, is an interiorising of heroism and force, the victory over one's own nature that is fundamental for 'refinement', nobility, 'style', and 'beauty' as all this is conceived in Japan. The *bushi*, therefore, is traditionally practiced in the domination of his own thoughts and sentiments, of his

[6] Gens is Latin for clan. In ancient Roman society, members of a gens believed that they shared common ancestry. They were both patriarchal and patrilineal.

[7] Gens is Latin for clan. In ancient Roman society, members of a gens believed that they shared common ancestry. They were both patriarchal and patrilineal.

own intensiveness and passionate nature, until he reaches an asceticism that is *sui generis*.[8] Moreover, even today the *bushido* is not foreign to the practices and discipline of Zen, which is one of the most 'esoteric' schools of Buddhism, with its own methods of controlling and awakening deep human energies, which border on the occult, while always emphasising the demand that every material realisation — for instance, the profession of arms and the Japanese way of fighting, *jujutsu*[9] — be understood as symbol and foundation for a spiritual realisation. As on the one hand there is the strictest law of honour, the scrupulous care to avoid even the lightest stain casting a shadow on the family to which the *samurai* belongs, so on the other hand there is the ideal of a subtle, inflexible, and unfathomable force of dominion which flees any theatrical and narcissistic exhibition, and any vanity, and recalls the teaching of Lao Tzu about the action that is not material action, *wei-wu-wei*,[10] and because of its invisibility is irresistible.

People in Italy who seriously defend the idea of a 'total education', especially with reference to the problem of future elites, cannot view these aspects of Japanese culture with indifference. They should rather acknowledge that the West, for centuries now, using the excuse of dominating nature and matter, has almost completely abandoned the task of ruling themselves; that in the West serious mistakes often subsist about what manliness really means, which is unilaterally confused with its coarsest, muscular, or violently 'voluntarist' forms; that because of unfortunate circumstances, the asceticism that has been acknowledged most especially in the West is asceticism of the religious type that is self-abnegating and contemplative, not the asceticism that can integrate, enhance, and transform a warrior vocation and an aristocratic ethics. To the degree to which there is a serious intention to overcome all these limitations with a truly integral virile education, ideas very close to those of *bushido* seem to us far from foreign and extraneous, but instead present a special character of relevance for the spiritual vanguard of our own movements of restoration.

Finally, a last point. Starting from the centre, which is constituted by the dynasty and radiating outward through veins constituted by the great *bushi* families, the transcendent conception of the Japanese state will reach all the remaining elements

[8] Latin: 'in a class by itself'.

[9] A form of martial arts.

[10] In Buddhism, wei-wu-wei designates a way of acting and being that is in complete harmony with the surrounding world, so as not to resist it or attempt to change it in any way. In Taoism this is regarded as the highest form of action.

of the nation and then, step by step, permeate the entire national society with the same meaning. All Japan therefore feels itself as the bearer of a divine force and as a unique race, which has a universal mission that is irreducible to any demand of what is only material. This is not an old, obsolete faith. Among the verses that every Japanese student learns in today's schools from a tender age are found, for instance, the following: 'Japan is the only divine land. The Japanese people are the only divine people, and therefore Japan can be the light of the world.' The well-known politician, Yosuke Matsuoka,[11] who recently represented his country at the League of Nations, expressed himself as follows: 'I am convinced that the mission of the Yamato race (i.e., the Japanese) is to protect the human race from hell, to safeguard it from destruction, and to lead it to a world of clarity.'

Here we ourselves face a 'myth', a force-idea, intended to create a high degree of tension in a people. As Rudolf Walter has mentioned, the notion of a 'chosen people' and a super-national mission are in reality very far from constituting a solely Japanese patrimony. The same sentiment is found wherever a people has been pervaded by a metaphysical sense through which, behind the human forces that belong to it, forces from on high are also acting. Thus we are dealing with a faith that the Aryan races also possessed, and, if we want to find an equivalent in the West no less august than the Japanese for antiquity, we need only remember the Roman symbol, the secular faith in *aeternitas Romae*[12] and the super-national and universal mission of the Roman race.

Today, these correspondences do not lack a precise meaning. Once the most contingent part of Japanese ideology, its exclusivism, has been separated, what remains as its central nucleus is the idea of a struggle that is justified not only by ambitions of material power and political reason, but also by an idea, a mission, and a vocation of spiritual dominion, and basically by a transcendent reference point. In one form or another, insights of this sort are being affirmed with increasing clarity in the struggle being fought today to limit the power of other myths and vocations. Japan can find itself with us, and especially with the conscious advocates of the Roman imperial tradition, on the same front, which is not only political, material, and

[11] Yosuke Matsuoka (1880–1946) was a Japanese diplomat, and later Minister of Foreign Affairs for Imperial Japan during 1940–41. As the head of the Japanese delegation to the League of Nations in 1933, his speech was followed by a walkout that announced Japan's withdrawal from the League.

[12] Literally 'eternal Rome', the concept was promulgated by Saint Augustine in his City of God, based on a pre-Christian Roman doctrine, that Rome is the apex of civilisation which stands first among the world's peoples.

military, but also spiritual and ideal. The ethnic and naturalistic differences here cannot mask the undeniable convergence in the theme of the traditional spirit except to the eyes of the myopic. Those who knew how to preserve this spirit from remote epochs can join together to fight beside those who are today trying to reconquer it after having overcome the decadence, disintegration, and darkness that has characterised the pseudo-civilisation of the modern world.

Scientific Racism's Mistake

(1942)

The debate on racism has recently been revived. This has stemmed less from a sincere desire to contribute to an objective clarification of the problems, however, than from the ambitions of certain groups. In it, a false note has been sounded that should be pointed out. We are referring to people who today insist on 'scientific racism'. They never tire of repeating that the problem of race should be expressed in terms that are 'purely scientific' and biological, and have chosen as a false target an undefined 'spiritual racism', against which they fight like Don Quixote against the windmills.

Here we have a misunderstanding that needs to be cleared up; cleared up, of course, before a public in good faith, and not before those who created it — people who almost always know perfectly well what the real situation is, but who are the first not to believe what they say. The relevant explanation is necessary because we are dealing essentially with intellectual integrity and honesty. When writers fail to demonstrate these elementary qualities of character, we think it is futile for them to proclaim themselves racists and to boast of their Aryan body type, which could even be quite true, and thus make themselves out as ready to eat Jews alive. We just used the term 'false note'. There is no other way to characterise the fact that, in a climate replete with spiritual, ethical, and heroic forces such as Fascism's, they make use of the superstition of 'scientism' in order to make an impression on the naïve. They have nothing but the idol of 'science' at their disposal, a fetish belonging to the toolbox of the age of democracy and the Enlightenment, and of the more or less Masonic and rationalist progressivism of the nineteenth century. This is really 'speaking the people's language', but in the worst sense of the expression.

Ideologies, which the more serious culture of a country has surpassed, often survive for a long time by the force of inertia in the less cultivated levels of a nation. We know well the drunken rampages of the 'Enlightenment' and its Jacobin consequences. People no longer believed in God, tradition, or blood, but only in Science with a capital S. Only with Science — and by this they naturally meant materialist and 'positivistic' science — would begin the age of truth and certainty, and the obscurantism and superstition of earlier times would be overcome. Science would create prosperity and happiness for humanity. The more extreme forms of

these ideological aberrations think that the peoples will be led into the future not, of course, by dynastic, spiritual, or heroic aristocracies, but by groups of technicians and scientists. According to this kind of radicalism, these progressivist and Enlightenment ideas have long since disappeared. Only Bolshevism is silly enough to believe that science and technology will open the doors of a new earthly paradise to the depersonalised and materialised masses.

Remnants of this same mentality, however, survive in less educated circles. The superstition of 'science' survives. People have been persuaded that it is only with science that we 'get serious'; that only science imposes itself on everyone with the language of facts, offers precise certainties, and establishes solid knowledge. They believe that everything else is fog and arbitrary ideas, more or less as Marxism calls everything that transcends the level of the brute economy 'superstructure'. Anyway, people who today are agitating so loudly for a 'purely scientific racism' are absolutely 'speaking the people's language'. Instead of helping to liquidate these remnants of an obsolete myth that survive in the less educated classes, they repeat them as a solid basis for 'making an impression', and to confer a false authority by means that are authoritative in their exterior affirmations, but which are incoherent and confused before every serious investigation conducted with sound thought. If we were dealing here with the natural sciences on a purely physical or abstractly classificatory level, the evil would not be fundamentally serious. In this field it is not possible to correct overnight mental deformations that date back centuries, and to convince everyone that the modern 'scientific' knowledge of nature is a crippled and inorganic knowledge that concerns only one sector of reality and, indeed, the least interesting sector. What it calls 'facts' do not exist in themselves, but are the artificial products of an arbitrary abstraction, and acquire different meanings according to the system which is used to interpret them. In the modern critique of science, all this is a commonplace.

There is no need to consult a Boutroux,[1] a Guénon, a Pavese,[2] or a Poincaré.[3] Every honest scientist, if taken *in camera caritatis*,[4] will of course acknowledge the relativism and contingency of the modern scientific 'knowledge' of nature. The myth of its 'indisputable facts' and its indisputable certainty belongs only to the grossest forms of vulgarisation and are related to the ideological remnants of the 'Enlightenment' that we have already mentioned. Since, however, we are still far from the restoration of a traditional, qualitative, and living knowledge of nature, the illusions that befuddle the general public about the actual range of the physical sciences do not have great consequences. Matters begin to proceed differently when we are no longer dealing with the physical and classificatory sciences, but with the domain of life, that is, the biological sciences. Here the consequences of the scientistic superstition could be absolutely deleterious. It is precisely to this field that the persons to whom we are alluding refer dogmatically, when they proceed to claim that this legendary 'objectivity' exists in the field of biological science, this language of 'pure and indisputable facts', this *ipse dixit*,[5] that modern epistemology has denied even in the domain of the physical sciences. In the area of social applications it has provoked these words from Mussolini: 'There is nothing truly scientific in the world. Science explains the How of phenomena, but it does not explain their Why.'[6]

There is also a question here of a special ignorance. Because of a misunderstood patriotism, the people we are talking about, who proclaim scientific racism without, however, possessing any scientific competence, are basically referring to Italian biology and anthropology. Italian biology and anthropology are areas that do not, unfortunately, stand at the forefront in the overall context of world research because of the simple fact that they reflect the general climate, both materialist and positivist, of nineteenth century Italy. On the contrary, many recent currents in biology and

[1] Émile Boutroux (1845–1921) was a French philosopher who held that modern science and religion could be reconciled. He was an adherent of the Theistic Personalist school, and not the later form of French Personalism which originated in which postulated that everything which exists must be understood as a manifestation of God, or the divine personality, and that, therefore, all individuals are an expression of a single, divine will.

[2] Roberto Pavese wrote several books on philosophy and parapsychology.

[3] Henri Poincaré (1854–1912) was a French mathematician and physicist who contributed to the development of the Theory of Relativity of Einstein. He was also known for his writings on the philosophy of science.

[4] Latin: figuratively, 'in secret'.

[5] Latin: figuratively, meaning a statement made on no other authority other than the person making it.

[6] Scritti e discorsi, vol. II (Milan: Hoepli, 1934), p. 160.

genetics have been compelled to assume working hypotheses and criteria that lead rather far afield from 'positivism' and scientism, from the narrow confines in which they find themselves. It is enough to cite Driesch[7] and Dacque.[8] In the Italian circles we are discussing, all this counts as non-existent. The biology that they make into a myth is essentially an outdated biology in the field of technical scientific research. They probably do not know this. Even if they did know it, it would probably change nothing, because for them it is not a question of explaining and working through the truth, but rather of spreading simple propaganda in a mistaken direction. And why is this? If we leave aside personal interests, it is essentially from fear. These people are well aware that, whenever the problem of race has not been discussed on a simply 'scientific' and 'biological' level, but rather in a totalitarian fashion, as happens in Germany, serious difficulties have arisen. We run into various tendencies, and headaches and complications are created, which, despite the outward appearance of polemical activism, they very much prefer to offer easy lies about, sparing the 'headaches'. These people do not notice that they are abdicating and playing the enemy's game. In fact, what more could those who would like to monopolise spiritual values, everything that is 'tradition' and worldview, ask for than to limit the problem of race to the material, biological, and 'scientific' level so as to have a free hand before such a castrated racism? The scientistic direction of racist propaganda is mistaken, because if the idea of race is really to become a force in Italy, it must be understood *in primis et ante omnia*[9] in the ethical and political field as spiritual and heroic. All the rest could only be working out the details.

This consideration is not only the indispensable premise for coherence between the racist idea and Fascist ideals, but is also the necessary condition to avoid a series of absurdities that are obvious. For instance, the people we are discussing hold the myth of the 'Italian race' dear. It is well-known that from the scientific and purely biological point of view, an Italian race does not exist. The biological and anthropological races are unities that have nothing to do with the historic nations, in

[7] Hans Driesch (1867–1941) was a German biologist and philosopher who successfully produced the first clone of an animal, a sea urchin, in 1891. He developed a philosophy called entelechy, denoting the existence of a psychic life-force that drives and permeates all life.

[8] Edgar Dacqué (1878–1945) was a German paleontologist and Theosophist. He sought to combine his scientific and mystical beliefs, postulating such ideas as racial memory that gave humans a memory of their experiences from previous stages of evolution, and that forms of life were self-evolving and were attempting to attain their most perfect development.

[9] Latin: 'first and foremost'.

which more or less all races are found, distributed in different ways. And so we would end up with a result that is quite the opposite of the solidarity at which these people are confusedly aiming, by talking improperly and unscientifically of an 'Italian race'. If, then, there is no common race on the biological and anthropological level, on what basis can we 'scientifically' found a myth like the one to which we have just referred? The theory of internal races, or races of the soul, which might come to our aid here, is exactly what has the effect of a thorn in the side of the people we are talking about — for mysterious reasons that will end by becoming clear. And on the purely scientific, biological, and anthropological level, what about the Jewish problem? Do they not notice the absurdity of insisting on dealing exclusively with it from the purely scientific point of view, while the Jewish problem in Italy has been imposed not on a biological basis, but on an essentially political and spiritual one? The banning of Jews from public life in Italy did not take place because their lips and noses and cranial indices were actually radically different from those of some 'Mediterranid' racial components, which are also present in our people. It happened rather on the basis of their works, their lifestyle and actions, and their spirit. Anyhow, from the 'purely anthropological' point of view, I find talk of a 'Hebrew race' rather risky. It is well-known that modern Israel does not constitute a race according to the prevalent opinion in modern racism, but rather a people comprised of rather diverse racial components.

Another point: on a 'purely biological' and positivist scientific basis, even the means of individuating the unity of Israel would be lacking. It is, however, very real, but it is found on a rather different level. This is why Roberto Farinacci has correctly written, 'Is it really necessary to justify our racism by resorting to differences in hair or noses, of hands and feet? Is it really necessary to entrust to analyses of blood and chromosomes what is a question of a political and spiritual nature? Of course not! We can follow a more certain path, which does not admit debates and removes every doubt, and persuades the most stubborn. We do not need the anthropologist and the biologist to prove that we belong to a different race.' (*Vita Italiana*, July 1942) Farinacci is expressing what is immediately acknowledged by people who really feel the problem of race, but not by those who squeal about it because it suits them or because they have received their marching orders. If race is not experienced directly as a way of being and a spontaneous interior realty, dolls from an anthropological museum, cranial measurements, and racial laws will be of very little use.

Of course human beings also have bodies, but research conducted on bodily, somatic, and anthropological phenomena is conclusive and serious only when these

phenomena can count as signs and symptoms of a corresponding interior reality, and after centuries of crossbreeding this does not always happen. Only by acknowledging this frankly and openly, and leaving behind once and for all the scientific myth, is it possible to speak the people's language — now in the good sense of the expression — and to prepare in Italy, little by little, a reawakening of an Aryan racial consciousness. Since it is useless to hide the fact: especially today, it is the Italian people who are wondering whether, finally, Jews are not becoming a kind of scapegoat, since they see everywhere one hundred percent 'Aryan' types who brazenly hoard, force prices up and take unfair profits, social climbers, and — why not? — even journalists who do not hesitate to resort to the most twisted and unfair methods for polemical purposes.

Let us add that if today there is so much talk of race, the reason is that people have finally noticed the fact of our effective decadence in Europe. Where race was really alive and strong, no one talked about it. A secure instinct sufficed as a guide. This instinct silently conferred an unwritten authority with very precise norms and laws. Scientific racism is following the wrong path, because it almost wants to repeat the attempt to create the homunculus. It seriously believes (or at least lets it be understood) that, when race is in trouble, it can be reconstructed and rescued, as it were, with laboratory procedures on the basis of 'positive' acquired knowledge, almost as how artificial mushrooms are grown when there is a shortage of natural ones. The undoubted and integral sentiment of race and blood which is found in the ancient Aryan cultures of the East such as Sparta, the old Roman aristocracy, and certain parts of Europe's nobility, did not need these shenanigans. It was secure without these pseudo-scientific excuses, which, let us say it once more, can make an impression only on the rabble and rustics of the world of our middle class and intellectuals. Awakening the sentiment and dignity of race directly, by essentially spiritual means, is what really matters. Biology, genetics, anthropology, Mendelian laws, and whatever else you may desire are all useful things, but are subordinate, like accessory tools and sources of knowledge to be used *cum grano salis*,[10] while always being aware of the demands of a superior ethical and political character. This is to say, there must be an integral conception of race, one that is especially ethical and spiritual in order to fix the measure and means by which certain scientific 'knowledge' can be accepted and incorporated as auxiliary elements. Here the contributions will never be very many, because, as we have said, biology and anthropology bear birth defects, always and indelibly. This is to say, they are founded on premises of a

[10] Latin: 'with a grain of salt'.

materialist and evolutionary character which are incompatible with what is needed for any truly superior sentiment of race.

We wonder, in fact, what will come of a sentiment taken from disciplines in which people continue to seriously believe in man's having descended from the monkey, more or less implicitly, and where, with the predominance of the theory of a single origin for life, it is necessary to resort to a materialistic determinism. Otherwise they may have recourse to the miraculous idea of 'scientifically' inexplicable mutations, in order to 'explain' the differentiation of species and races from one hypothetical homogenous original substance. Try to touch similar scientistic superstitions, or try to recall the testimony of all ancient peoples concerning the earliest races, which were not animals but almost 'divine', and you will suddenly see yourself accused of an anti-scientific mentality and even of…magic. This is exactly the charge levelled at us by Canella,[11] for instance, addressing we do not know what innocent souls, in a typically inconclusive work which was supposed to treat racial psychology, in his words, 'scientifically'.

We concede that, despite the ideological deformations that proceed from their premises, some results of genetic and biological research can be useful, but always, as we have said, with the proper reservations, must always be checked by super-scientific principles which will constitute the final court of appeal. An example is the Mendelian laws and their development into the so-called 'higher Mendelism'.[12] They are true and accepted, or not, depending on the reference point. Pavese has very appropriately distinguished race as 'fact' — that is, a spontaneous naturalistic effect produced by a process that is over and done with — from race as 'becoming'. For the first aspect of race, the laws are roughly exact. For the second, instead, there are no longer precise laws. Those who fail to acknowledge this distinction end up turning Mendelism into a kind of fate, which can be used, for instance, as an accessory tool in the anti-Jewish campaign, by demonstrating the inadequacy of all legislation that does not take the element of heredity into account. At the same time, however, we shall find ourselves paralysed before the essential tasks of a selective and active racism. In fact, there would be very little to do, if these laws are supposed to control race as

[11] Mario Canella was a Lamarckian professor of biology and zoology who worked for the Fascist Party's Racial Office from 1940. While he regarded race to be characterised by several different factors, he considered psychology to be the most important one.

[12] Gregor Johann Mendel (1822–1884) was a Czech-German scientist, and is often called 'the father of modern genetics'. Mendel's Laws of Inheritance, based on his study of plants across several generations, attempted to define how specific characteristics are transmitted from parents to their offspring.

'becoming' (that is, what counts the most politically), if what is present in a people because of crossbreeding that took place centuries ago constitutes a fatal heritage, and if the 'dominant' and 'recessive' characteristics are supposed to remain such *ad infinitum* in everyone's body and mind. This is not the place, however, to go into technical details. It is essentially the central thesis that matters. Racists who defend the exclusive claims of the scientistic point of view, and who can coherently boast only of the gorilla and the pithecanthropus as their glorious ancestors, should be able to persuade themselves that we in Italy do not find ourselves in a Soviet regime, nor in the times of the Jacobin Enlightenment, which would mean that the adjective 'spiritual', when added to the noun 'racism', would signify shame and disrepute. We naturally prefer to define our terms, by saying that spirit, for us, does not mean either philosophical deviation or 'theosophy', or a mystical, devotional evasion, but simply what well-born people always understood by race in better times: that is, rectitude, internal integrity, character, dignity, manliness, and an immediate and direct sensitivity for all values, virtues that stand at the foundation of all human greatness and that tower over, and so dominate, the level of all contingent and material reality.

The view of race as a 'scientistic' construction and a mannequin from an anthropological museum we leave to those parts of a pseudo-intellectual middle class who are still dominated by the idols of the positivism of the nineteenth century. This is assuredly the last thing that can propitiate the awakening of that force and dignity which, in terms of racism, could only be attained in a heroic and spiritual vision of the world such as Fascism's.

Postscript. In response to the reply that was published in his magazine (*Civiltà Fascista*, June 1942), we would like to permit ourselves to draw the attention of our illustrious colleague, Pellizzi,[13] to the complex 'style' of our polemical encounter. We began by noting the appropriateness of a Race Office of the Fascist Party,[14] and in that connection, rather than propose personal discoveries, we talked about what was created in Germany at the point when people wanted to act seriously. *Critica Fascista* replied by reproving us for forgetting several initiatives undertaken by the Fascist Party and the Institute of Fascist Culture in the area of racism. We responded by taking notice of these initiatives, but asking whether, with all this, we have got any closer at all to the level of organisation and coherence to which we referred positively

[13] Camillo Pellizzi (1896–1979) was a professor who frequently did work on Fascist policies, and who was acquainted with Ezra Pound. In 1940 he was appointed the President of the National Institute of Fascist Culture. After the war, he was the first professor of sociology in Italy.

[14] The Race Office was subsidiary to the Ministry of Popular Culture.

in, for instance, the German model. We then mentioned the principal defect, that is, of letting everyone express his opinion and the use of 'unofficial' elements which are called up to help only at the moment of harvest. Well, what could *Civiltà Fascista*[15] reply? Only this: it asked us what political and scientific authority we have for speaking about these problems. The affair is really edifying, as 'style'. Let us put on one side 'scientific' authority, because if it is a question of that science of which we have spoken in this article, we plan to have little to do with it. Even less, then, if by science the fantasies of a certain 'Idealism' are understood, with which we have settled our accounts in works we wrote when young.[16]

As for 'political' authority, obviously there has been a mistake. We will allow our colleague Pellizzi to decide — to deal with an extreme case — if a responsible Fascist leader will refuse to hear what will be proposed by a knowledgeable person who can think straight when dealing with coherence and organisation, in a matter of statistics or economics, for example, or whether he will instead pay more attention to a someone who is a long-time card-carrying Fascist, but who has little or no experience or vocation in these matters. One last point. *Civiltà Fascista* says that it is precisely the system of 'intellectual democracy' that is supposed to give it the way to read our writings 'with interest and curiosity'. This assertion is rash, and someone could say that it is very close to one of those 'indirect shots' to which people customarily resort when they do not know what to say in response. (It is enough to glance at the preceding number of *Vita Italiana*, pp. 155–160, where the case is found of a 'professor' [and so a person familiar with 'academic science'], wounded in the war and a member of the Fascist squads [and so familiar with the Fascist Party], who has been assigned the task of defending a Jewish philosopher.)

In any case we say loud and clear that we would be happily disposed to painfully deprive the colleagues of *Civiltà Fascista* of the pleasure of reading our writings with 'interest and curiosity', at the point when one is finally acting with authority in the area in question, according to a style of spiritual bullying (*squadrismo*), silencing newcomers, dilettantes, and compromisers. In this way, one might begin to seriously give a sense of what 'race' really is, as against the middle class, bureaucracy, and 'intellectuals'.

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[15] Civiltà Fascista was the journal of the National Institute of Fascist Culture, published between 1934 and 1943.

[16] During the 1920s, before turning to spiritual and traditionalist matters, Evola penned a number of works on the subject of Idealist philosophy. None have been translated as of yet, but some excerpts have been made available at the Gornahoor Website (www.gornahoor.net).

ARTICLES ON NATIONAL SOCIALISM

(1933–1971)

Critical Observations on National Socialist 'Racism'

(November 1933)

The speech recently delivered by Adolf Hitler at the cultural conference of the National Socialist Party at Nuremberg, which was reproduced by the German press with the title, 'Profession of Heroic Faith', deserves attention in our opinion for the elements it offers for understanding the famous doctrine of race that plays such an important part in the ideology of the revolution of the swastika, as is known. In fact we are dealing with official expressions of the head of this movement, which are bound to express what aspects of this doctrine National Socialism has adopted in the most official and unambiguous way. We shall here describe the principal concepts explained by Chancellor Hitler, adding to them a brief comment.

The first point, which was emphasised as a general premise, is a curious mixture of *naturalism* and *faith in providence*. It is curious, because a truly theological fatalism is placed at the foundation of a heroic vision, which directly recalls the Protestant doctrine of absolute predestination. 'Providence', says Hitler in so many words, 'has willed that men are not equal. It has determined a plurality of races and for each one has fixed special gifts and characteristics, which cannot be changed without incurring degeneration and decadence.' This is a double predestination, *biological* and *psychic* at the same time. The worldviews of the various races corresponds to their intimate biological and morphological laws by which they are constrained, and which can sometimes be obvious and sometimes hidden, but which does not change essentially in the course of centuries. From this proceeds a cultural and spiritual pluralism, which in its time entered in open conflict with the universalistic views of, and was intoned catholically by, the party of the centre. Every race has its own truths and worldviews.

Hitler explicitly denies that it is possible to speak in absolute terms of a given worldview being right or wrong. A worldview can be called right or wrong only in relation to a definite race, its goals and its will to existence and power. A truth, he says, which 'is more natural to one stock, because it is innate in it and suitable for the manifestation of its life, can signify not only a serious danger but absolutely the end,

in different situations, for another people who are formed differently'. Universalism and internationalism are synonyms for uncertainty, the decadence of instinct, and the loss of contact with the deepest forces of one's own people. If we may define as universal the vision in which all ethnic differences enter into a naturalistic and temporal plane, beyond which there exists a unique truth and a super-political Christian society, in which there is neither Aryan or Semite, neither European nor Asian, and so on — then it is certainly not possible to define the doctrine expounded by Hitler as 'orthodox', once we grant, of course, that it has been thought through and developed without intellectual compromises.

Some critical considerations are in order, however. Above all we are tempted to ask: if every truth is linked to a race and is true only for it alone, whether the very truth according to which this pluralism is believed in should be acknowledged as true only for one race, being prescribed by its particular characteristics, or whether it is a truth for all races universally and super-racially. It is the embarrassing and contradictory situation to which every form of relativism in general is condemned. In the act of proclaiming itself true, relativism comes to assume, *mutatis mutandis*,[1] precisely the characters of absolutism and universalism. But let us leave to one side this objection, which is of a general and speculative nature. One positive aspect must certainly be acknowledged in Hitler's position: his reaction against rationalist, Enlightenment, and democratic myths of European decadence. The doctrine of race is a positive value, insofar as it signifies the primacy of quality over quantity, of the differentiated over the formless, of the organic over the mechanical, and especially insofar as it proposes the ideal of a profound and living unity between spirit and life, thought and race, culture and instinct. Nevertheless, a similar ideal — concerning content — still remains undefined. Secondly, the ideal is something that, to be valid, needs to be liberated from both its fatalistic background and the naturalistic element.

About the first point, accepting the task of a creative synthesis between the innate idea of a race and the material conditions that are imposed on it, all the way to a 'crystal-clear conformity to the goal' —*kristallklar effüllten Zweckmässigkeit* — is not the same thing as resolving the fundamental problem: what content, case by case, must be active in this synthesis? How to recognise what is the task of one race, and therefore 'true', and not of another race? Here Hitler seems to be inclined towards a solution that is pragmatic — that is, practical and empiricist — when he says that it is

[1] Latin: 'by the right of one's office'.

difficult to rule on the correctness of a particular vision, that is, its right to be valid for a particular race, except on the basis of the consequences and effects that result from it among the men who have assumed it. This view becomes problematic, and we might almost say, 'experimental'. The famous predestination on the part of 'providence' becomes a myth that serves at best as a 'force-idea'; that is, it reinforces suggestively a given vocation or persuasion. Nothing is objectively said about a criterion that can justify *a priori* and link precisely a given mission or truth to a given race. It is a little curious that Hitler conceives heroism itself as a mere 'datum'. Just as cats or elephants give birth to offspring of their own species and each species has its own characteristics, so also heroes or non-heroes would beget heroic or non-heroic offspring. The heroic man thinks and acts heroically by nature and racial characteristics, or rather by predestination, not by a free inner action. Hitler also said that every action that does not conform to the innate ethnic and spiritual characteristic is only a way of decadence. So, for instance, in every race predestined to be non-heroic, every effort to assume heroic truth and raise oneself heroically would be a way of decadence.

There is an additional issue. A fundamental point is the difference of 'Nordic and Aryan' man from the characteristics of the man of other races. This point is *not* resolved by Hitler — at least in the context of the speech we are now examining — insofar as he simply describes, as being characteristic of 'Nordic and Aryan man', the traits of having always produced 'a determining synthesis among the tasks set before him, his goal, and the given material', both in antiquity and in modern times, by means of his free creative spirit. In fact this difference is reduced to the difference between people who know how to organically realise their nature in their own lifestyle and people who do not. But are there not, perhaps, different lifestyles? 'Classically' realising one's own mode of being is an ideal that can be achieved on the basis of characteristics that may be Hellenic or Hebraic, Japanese or German. The concept remains undefined and the characteristic traits of the famous 'Nordic and Aryan' element remain unclear. More positively, Hitler hints at an opposition due to an innate inclination in certain races to transcend the naturalistic element, the primitive substratum of existence, in order to transform the general traits of one's own life. This is, however, only a hint. He barely touches on everything that was inspired by the 'supernatural' and 'twice-born' (*dvija*) character belonging to the *arya* in opposition to the *asurya* in the ancient traditions, the 'dark' man who is dominated by the 'demonic' element of nature.

Moreover, a further question is posed from the critical viewpoint. Granted that Hitler is not thinking of raising up seers capable of directly learning the foreordained plans of divine providence to order the different tasks and destinies of the races; granted that, as we have seen, there is no criterion to *a priori* determine the spiritual element that a given race will have to achieve demiurgically — the danger exists of ending in pure naturalism, and so in materialism. We mean that we can always suspect that, instead of a creative and heroic adherence of the race to the idea, there would be a simple subordination of the idea to what is given as race. In other words, the simple constitution of a given race, what is found to exist naturalistically or even (in the empirical sense) historically, and whatever it acquires by a brute will to existence and power, could become the only criteria by which that given race will pragmatically decide on the truth, validity, and congeniality of elements belonging to a higher plane, whether metabiological, spiritual, or cultural.

We want to emphasise the importance of this consideration, which highlights the reef on which racism could end up. Especially in today's world, with the breaking out of forces of an inferior and collective character on every side, it is essential to consider this dilemma: *either spirit that gives form to race* (particularly a nation) *or race* (nation) *that gives form to spirit*. Still more briefly: *either determination from above or determination from below*. People who believe that there is something fallacious and quibbling in this juxtaposition are not aware of one of the greatest problems on the contemporary political horizon.

As we have already shown on other occasions in this journal, there exist two distinct types of racism and nationalism: one is *spiritual*, the other *materialist* and subversive. The fact that both constitute a contrast to democratic and internationalist levelling and liberalist disintegration should not lead us to confuse them in the least. In one case, we have the emergence of a pre-personal (and therefore promiscuous) substratum of a given stock, which as 'soul of the race' acquires a mystic nimbus, claims for itself a sovereign right, and does not acknowledge any value in spirit, intellectualism, and culture except insofar as they transform themselves into tools in the service of a temporal and political entity. In this case, race and nation really establish a disintegrating pluralism and set themselves up in a multiplicity of antagonistic concepts, which by their nature cannot admit any higher and unitary reference point. This is when racism acquires a sense that is ethnically and collectivistically conditioned, which we have said to be in inevitable contrast with any universalist vision, such as, for instance, Catholicism's.

But things are very different when nation and race are presented truly and not rhetorically as spiritual and transcendent concepts, when what stands at the centre is no longer blood nor collective soul nor a tradition in the vulgar empirical sense, nor the brute will to existence and power of a group. No! It is precisely an *idea*, almost like a determining force from above. This is not the place — and anyhow we have written about this extensively in books — but we can at least mention that this character has been found in every higher type of civilisation and traditional state in antiquity, and *especially among the Aryan peoples*. In this case, racism's correctness is limited to this point: recognising that the formative action of forces that are higher than nature upon nature itself — that is, on the element that is naturalistic and biologically conditioned — must be so deep as to be translated into a definite heredity and definite 'form' or 'style' of life, which is common to a given group. It remains equally clear, however, that this heredity, form, or style is not explained in itself, does not have its own principle in itself, and is not a mere 'datum', as might be true of the characteristics of an animal species. Rather they are appearances and almost signs and consecrations of a conquest and a higher force.

Hitler wrote, 'Greeks and Romans found themselves so close to Germans because they had their roots in a single fundamental race, which is why the immortal creations of the ancient peoples exercise an attraction on their descendants who are racially related to them.' It seems to us, on the other hand, that this very question should lead to something more than mere racism. In particular, Romans and Germans agreed with one another and understood one another — and created the strongest type of civilisation that Europe has ever known — in a period, the imperial Middle Ages, that was dominated not by racist particularism, but *by a universal idea*. The Middle Ages shows us one of the most distinct examples of a super-political and super-national unity, which acted formatively from above and according to a single principle that, far from being smashed by ethnic egoisms and nationalistic prevarications, ended up being applied to different races in different forms, but also such as to create, through an intimate affinity of spirit, a *corpus*, a grandiose and marvelous *ordinatio ad unum*,[2] in which the individual does not end up frustrated but spiritually integrated.

As much as we have studied not only Hitler's writings, but also the writings of the chief National Socialist ideologues, it is still not clear to us if, in the last instance,

[2] Latin: 'orientation towards the One', meaning God. This concept, first outlined by Saint Augustine, was one of the underlying principles of Christian and political thought during the Middle Ages.

the deep soul of the revolutionary current of the swastika is oriented toward one or the other of the two directions we discussed above. *The fundamental problem of the Europe of the future seems to us to be the following: overcoming the internationalist collapse and being reintegrated into values of quality, race, and difference; in such a way, however, so as not to end up in the pluralism of closed unities and of ideas that have passed into the service of matter and empirical politics, but instead in a way that leaves open the possibility of the formation of a higher, ecumenical reality that is suited to unite the nations in spirit, in a manly way, without confusing them in body*.

The future will tell us in what direction the German restoration will end up orienting itself. For now it is clear that, insofar as Fascism has indissolubly joined to the idea of nation and stock a higher universal idea — the idea of Rome — it has already decisively placed the symbol that alone can have a positive value in the range of the problem we have discussed.

Is Nazism on the Way to Moscow?

(March 1935)

The events of 30 June[1] in Germany have, as a whole, the following significance: a) the elimination of 'inconvenient' elements of a varied nature; b) the elimination of a movement of the extreme Left with a connection to Roehm (assault teams, the so-called 'second wave', which were already denounced by von Papen);[2] c) the elimination of an extreme Right, which was aiming to tactically utilise the Leftist elements in order to undermine National Socialism and then affirm themselves (von Schleicher).[3]

From 30 June 1934 until today, Nazism still finds itself in an oscillation that seems to be slowly settling toward the Right, even if in a moderate sense. The movement's centre seems, that is, to have moved away from the influence of the assault teams in order to move under the influence of the Reichswehr.[4] It is possible, however, that this development will not have a completely regular course (rumours of appointing Goering to replace von Papen) and that a reaction of the strictly 'revolutionary' elements will take place at a certain moment, among whom there are people who have talked about Hitler's 'betrayal'. It could therefore be useful to know

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[1] 30 June 1934 marked the beginning of the Night of the Long Knives, a period which lasted until 2, when the Nazis arrested and executed many of their political opponents, allegedly to prevent a coup by the Stormtroopers (SA). The victims were not all part of the SA, however, and the Nazis used the opportunity to eliminate many of their rivals in the conservative establishment as well.

[2] Franz von Papen (1879–1969) had served as an officer in the war, then joined the Centre Party. In 1932, he was appointed by Hindenburg to be Chancellor of Germany, although he was forced to resign after only a few months. In January 1933 he urged Hindenburg to appoint Hitler, believing that he could be controlled and the Nazis used as a tool by the conservatives. After being marginalised by them, he resigned following the Night of the Long Knives.

[3] Kurt von Schleicher (1882–1934) was a Reichswehr general who sought to make the military the most powerful player in German politics again, and heavily involved in the machinations that eventually brought Hitler to power, believing that Hitler could be used as a pawn by the more mainstream conservatives. He served as Minister of Defence in von Papen's government. When von Papen resigned as Chancellor in December 1932, von Schleicher succeeded him, but his brief administration was beset by too many problems and he was dismissed after less than two months, bringing Hitler to power. He was killed during the Night of the Long Knives.

[4] The Reichswehr was the name of the German military from 1919 until 1935.

what these elements want, what their ideology is, and according to what ideals they want to restore Germany by means of National Socialism.

To learn the answers to these questions we have the help of a book that was published on the eve of the Nazi revolution, and could therefore enjoy complete freedom of expression, defining clearly and courageously concepts that today, naturally, do not appear openly as such, but all the same do not cease to be valued by the elements of Nazism we have just mentioned. We are alluding to Carl Dryssen, *The Message of the East*: *Fascism, National Socialism, and Prussianism*,[5] which has a striking cover featuring a photomontage in which the figures of Mussolini, Hitler, and Cardinal Gasparri[6] mingle against a red background, along with assault divisions on parade with unfurled flags under the Brandenburg Gate.

The author develops his thoughts on the level of pure economic politics, but fails even within these rather narrow horizons. Two worlds in opposition are supposed to exist, more or less separated by the Rhine, which he calls 'East' and 'West'. For Dryssen the 'West' means the world of liberalism, democracy, internationalism, and then, in a word, capitalism. North America, France, and England are supposed to belong to it, with their maxims of free trade and their financial imperialism. In sum, internally the principle of individualism belongs to this system; externally the principle of imperialism. Its liberalism is hypocrisy in the service of a policy that is either hegemonic or destructive of other peoples.

For Dryssen the 'East' means, on the other hand and above all, Germany. To an industrial and capitalist type of state he opposes an essential agrarian state; to individualism the social spirit; to an imperialist and internationalist economy, an economy of consumption, with a direct relation to its own blood and soil.

According to Dryssen, the World War meant an attack of the West on the East. It marked the critical moment in which the individualist and capitalist idea jumped over the limits of its own world and became — if one can say so — explosive, attempting to overthrow and bend under its system — indifferent to blood and soil — the part of Europe that still resisted it or could resist it. Obviouslym Dryssen is here considering matters in a way that is arbitrary, or at least very one-sided. German

[5] Die Botschaft des Ostens : Fascismus, Nationalsozialismus und Preussentum (Breslau: Korn, 1935).

[6] Pietro Gasparri (1852–1934) was made a Cardinal in 1907. On the order of Pope Pius X, he spent 13 years compiling the first-ever codification of Roman Catholic canon law, which he completed in 1917. In 1914 he was appointed the Cardinal Secretary of State, and he signed many important concordats between the Vatican and other states, the most significant being the Lateran Accords which were signed with the Fascist government of Italy in 1929, ending the Vatican's 60-year conflict with the Italian state.

and Nazi circles have reproached Wilhelmine Germany with certain underhanded agreements with finance capitalism and German big business, while it is known that 'territorial demands' and the principle of nationality played a preponderant role in the Allies' ideology all the way to the peace treaties.

In any event, these confusions are unimportant when compared with the ones that Dryssen commits when he goes on to examine the post-war situation, and especially the significance of Fascism.

In the ideological, social, and political chaos of the post-war period, two chief antagonistic tendencies appeared: one *Roman and reformist*, the other *German and revolutionary*, corresponding respectively to *Fascism* (as Dryssen imagines it) and *National Socialism* (as Dryssen hopes it will be, and as it exists in the minds of the Left-wing hoodlums we have mentioned.)

For Dryssen, Fascism does not possess a truly revolutionary character, in the sense that it has not led to a type of state that is really different from the 'Western' state, that is, individualist and capitalist. Harking back to the prejudices of who knows what antiquated and myopic schema from historical materialism, Dryssen claims, moreover, that ancient Rome and later the canon law formulated by the Church of Rome and its praxis would never have led beyond the 'Western' world. The Roman ideal of *pax* and *justitia*[7] is supposed to have the mere significance of a system of social equilibrium and normalisation that worked on premises that were essentially individualistic and capitalistic, and the social ideology of the Church did not follow a substantially different course. For Dryssen, Fascism has not distanced itself from this tradition. Once its original revolutionary impulse was 'tamed' (*bezähmt*) and 'rendered socialist', it did not signify a revolt against the old system, but only a correction of it. Fascism recognises both private property and private initiative, and only removes the rough patches and unbalanced swings that are found in the class struggle and unbridled liberal capitalism. Therefore it leads to an *authoritarian capitalism* sustained by state control, by which the fundamental elements of the old 'Western' system are not only acknowledged, but strengthened and removed from the salutary crisis that other countries are in the process of overthrowing. 'Revolution' is avoided. In addition, Fascism maintains the imperialist tendency, which is 'a vocation inseparable from the Roman tradition'. It is not content with its validity as a national political ideal, but, directly or indirectly, it presents itself beyond Italy's borders as an example. However, insofar as Rome succeeds in its role as saviour of Western

[7] 'Peace' and 'justice'.

capitalism in its death throes, it represents a new danger for the German anti-capitalist and 'socialist' tradition. For Dryssen, National Socialism is called to defend this tradition in a revolutionary manner, to continue the ancient emancipation movement from Rome — *Los von Rom*![8] — that began in the religious sphere with Luther.

In addition, for Dryssen the Lutheran revolt stands, in spirit, in the closest relationship with the German Peasants' Revolt,[9] which many German racists consider the last gasp of the Nordic will to independence. The peasants that rose against the nobility and the clergy demanded that their land pass to them in communistic form. They took their place next to the Lutheran impatience with authoritarian individualism, imperialism, urbanisation, and glorification of the world, which are all said to be 'Roman'. Basically, we are dealing with two aspects of an essentially 'socialistic' upheaval that then — all this is Dryssen's opinion — is fundamental for the Prussian tradition, which is supposed to be agrarian and anti-capitalist, because property has a social function and kings figure as 'servants of the people'. National Socialism should therefore make up its mind to be a 'social-Prussian' revolution against the West and against 'Rome'. It should stand up against the attempt to reduce Germany to a colony in service to 'Western' Europe, which was at work in the German revolution of 1918 and governed by the principles of capitalism, democracy, and internationalism, but also against the conservative and 'feudal' remnants of the German economy and against Fascist 'authoritarian capitalism'. For Dryssen, Hitler faces two alternatives: either Fascism or National Socialism; either West or East; either maintaining the capitalist system, the final product of the individualistic conception of state and economy, or a radical rejection of it and the development of a completely new economic and political structure.

Dryssen offers a vision of life that is either heroic or economic as alternatives. The German vocation is one that flees cosmopolitan culture; instinctively thinks in terms of collectivity instead of individualistically; aspires not to wealth but to power; values people and not things by cultivating a fighting spirit that is not in the service

[8] 'Away from Rome!' was the name of a movement which began in Austria in 1898, and encouraged German Austrians to reject Catholicism and become Lutherans as part of a Pan-Germanic nationalist vision. It was moderately successful, but disappeared after the First World War.

[9] The German Peasants' Uprising took place across the German-speaking regions of Europe in 1524 and 1525, when the peasants revolted against the authority of the aristocracy of the Holy Roman Empire, which was viewed as unjust, and was influenced by Protestantism. The aristocrats were victorious and many thousands of peasants were killed.

of any sort of imperialism, but rather in defence of its own soil, despising the 'cadaveric obedience' of Catholic and Jesuitical morality, and is led in a revolutionary way to every struggle without surrender for the altars of its race.

With all this, it seems to us that we have enough blunders and confusions. Like many other racist writers who, while not doing real honour to the culture of their own countries, repeat slogans in the wake of Chamberlain[10] and other dilettantes, Dryssen not only does not understand either the sense of the Roman spirit or of Fascism, but also seems to know nothing of the best tradition of the German people themselves. First of all, by declaring with all seriousness that the goal of the new Fascist system is 'power through wealth' and that the values of the ancient Roman spirit can be reduced to individualism, capitalism, and urbanism, while loyalty to soil and the asceticism of force and heroism is supposed to be a Prussian monopoly, or worse — he is talking like an irresponsible person, if not an ignoramus. Who does not know that the unity of sword and plow, the double face of Mars, the god of war and agriculture, the sacral connection to their own property among patricians, and so on, were characteristics of what can be understood as the pure and original Roman spirit, and not the decadence that was created in Rome by foreign elements? If Dryssen's horizons were not so narrow and his factious exclusivism did not amount to genuine mental obtuseness, we would be glad to acknowledge — because it is true — that we are here facing a general Indo-European patrimony, which therefore is not a distinctive trait of either his people or ours. But this would amount to once again showing the one-sidedness of his contrasts in order to make it clear how much of what he denies in his assertions exists, and vice versa.

Dryssen shows no less blindness in relation to Fascism. The entire warrior education that Fascism seeks to give the new generations by choosing a highly significant motto, 'Life is warfare and warfare is life', the Fascist struggle against urbanism, its precise and concrete initiatives for returning to the land and agrarianism, the new dispositions in the area of law aimed at changing — just as Dryssen wants it — the motto 'property is theft' into 'property is a duty', and so on, where does Dryssen put them? Is Fascism a system of force in the service of capitalism and a purely economic ideal of life? In no way! Fascism's system of authority turns the materialist dependence of politics on economics on its head. It therefore reaffirms the subordination of economics to politics because it does not fall into the error either

[10] Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855–1927) was an English philosopher whose ideas about the supremacy of the Germanic peoples, as outlined in his most fundamental book, The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century, became highly influential upon the German racialist movement.

of socialism or liberalism, but places ahead of its economic reality, which is differentiated and free but disciplined, the higher ideal of 'nation' and then 'empire' as a reference point that is super-economic, super-individual, and spiritual. Fascism respects private property, but not in homage to 'Western' truth, but because it is among the essential material conditions for the dignity and autonomy of the person.

Dryssen makes two other serious mistakes, first, by confusing *personality* and *individuality*; then by confusing *internationalism* and *universality*. These are errors that we have had occasion to denounce in this journal, but they persist tenaciously in the dominant Nazi ideologies.

Concerning the first point, we shall repeat that it is possible to combat liberalism and individualism without saying a word against the higher ideal of *personality*. On the contrary, combating them is the premise for really understanding this ideal. Socialism and individualism are basically two integral aspects of a single materialist, anti-qualitative, and levelling decadence that have arisen in recent times. The ideal of free, differentiated, and virile personalities as elements to create an organic and hierarchical political reality where each person has his own function and his own dignity is superior to both socialism and liberalism. Moreover this ideal is especially and generically Indo-European, then Classical, Classical Roman, and, finally, Roman and Germanic (medieval). So Dryssen can become as angry as he wants with the liberalistic, democratic, and individualistic 'West'. Neither the Roman spirit nor Fascism has anything in common with this 'West'. In reality, we are dealing here with a relatively recent phenomenon that emerged from the ferment of the decomposition of our common culture, which can only illegitimately be called the West. To the socialism that, as the 'solidarity of the working class', expresses only a sentiment of inferiority cemented by envy for those who own property, Dryssen opposes a socialism not of 'having' but of 'being', not of hate but of dignity, based on an 'aristocratic corporatism' in the higher sense, on disdain for wealth, on returning to the soil and the sentiment that every urbanistic opulence is a poison. In this he is deceiving himself that he has delineated a 'Prussian' tradition. On the contrary, these are values that our tradition already possesses and that Fascism has reclaimed to a certain degree, and which, finally, were a common patrimony in medieval culture. *Therefore, the fact is that what Dryssen calls the 'West' is only a recent decadence of the true, traditional West, and while he tries to locate us in this decadence, making of every blade of grass a bundle in the name of anti-Rome, the*

truth is that his own reference points are to be labelled 'Western' in his sense of perversion and contemporary decadence.

In fact, the soul of Dryssen's 'Prussian' anti-Roman spirit — aside from 'anti-capitalism', which plays the part of an *idée fixe* with him — is *Luther*. In other words, the man who was the first to foment that individualistic and anti-hierarchical revolt that, little by little, was fated to move into the political field, and to the revolt of the German princes against the universal and 'Roman' principle of the Empire, and from there to the revolt of the democratically conceived nations, which was fated to lead straight to our contemporary individualistic disintegration. Instead of commending that which, could have attained to the large-scale initiative in his own nobler German tradition, as in, for instance, the Ghibelline[11] idea, Dryssen completely repudiates this tradition. In the name of Luther, 'Prussian socialism',[12] anti-capitalism, and the 'message of the East' he is going to end up — where? — in the arms of *Lenin*. No more and no less.

Dryssen wonders whether, at the end of the day, a true spiritual frontier really exists between the Elbe and the Urals, and without hesitation he points to Bolshevik Russia as the only great power that has decisively set itself up today against the 'West', Rome, and capitalism. He says that for a German who has made up his mind to rid himself of everything that is foreign and plans to change his essence from 'Western,' the fear of turning into a Bolshevik is a childish fear. When its real cause is understood, Nazism's 'social' revolution must lead as far from capitalism and individualism as Bolshevism, since Nazism and Bolshevism have the ideal of a socialised state, agrarian and armed, in common, where in a collectivism of its native

[11] Ghibelline is a thirteenth century term which was originally coined to name the supporters of the imperial power of the Hohenstaufen throne against Papal authority. They were in conflict with the Guelphs, who favoured the rule of the Pope. Evola saw this conflict as highlighting the distinction between priestly and royal authority in the state, since he believed the Ghibelline view to be the only valid one from a traditional perspective. He discusses this at length in Revolt Against the Modern World and The Mystery of the Grail.

[12] The term Prussian socialism was first coined by Oswald Spengler in an essay of the same name. He held that the organisation of the modern Prussian state had always been in accordance with socialist principles, albeit of a communitarian and hierarchical type.

soil the ancient German system of the *Almende*[13] would meet that of the ancient Slavic *mir,*[14] in new forms.

There is more. As the final apotheosis of the message of the 'East', the hierophant Dryssen predicts that Luther and Lenin are embracing like brothers. Soviet atheism — Dryssen affirms with complete tranquillity — is an empty bogeyman, meant to lead us by the nose. In reality, it represents the spirit of the Reformation: it is a rebellion against official religiosity, which is superficial, Romanised, secularised, and authoritarian, bound by earthy riches. It is precisely from this kind of revolt that a new piety can develop, one that is true, inner, free, and social, as it was in the aspiration of Luther, prophet of the German people liberated from the Roman yoke.

With this, we see Dryssen make a hard crash-landing after his timid gestures of flying, represented by his conception of an 'aristocratic socialism' (which, however, the oldest form of our Roman Senate can claim for its own) and by references to the asceticism of force and the heroic Prussian style. Once he has said 'no' to the ideal of a Roman *universality,* and in his infantile fear of a presumed 'Fascist imperialism' (almost as though Mussolini had not spoken of this empire 'that has no need to conquer even a square kilometre of territory to realise itself' — and as if, on the other hand, *Deutschland über alles, über alles in der Welt* were the anthem of…German agrarian anti-imperialism), he falls into the arms of the Bolshevik anthem, the 'Internationale'.[15] He really seems not to know that the concepts of fatherland and nation have no place in the Soviet system, and still less the concept of a tradition where the land can count for anything more than material and clods of clay, and that the Communist abolition of private property is only one episode in a much vaster initiative aiming at the abolition of the very concept of personality, of every autonomous faculty, and of every interest, however detached from that of collective man, omnipotent and materialistic, who has risen up to 'redeem' humanity in a faceless, proletarianised mass.

With this, I believe we have said enough. It would be all too easy to demolish an ideology like his point by point. The value we find in this ideology is not logical, but

[13] Almende was the system of property ownership by village communities in medieval Germany, by which land was also distributed to the peasants for farming.

[14] In medieval Russia, a mir was a self-governing peasant community which oversaw the equitable redistribution of land among its members.

[15] The 'Internationale', which calls for socialist principles to be adopted universally, was first composed by French socialists in the late nineteenth century, and was adopted as the anthem of the early Soviet Union. In 1944 it was replaced by the more nationalistic 'Hymn of the Soviet Union'.

that of a *symptom*. History shows us that the ideas that have had the greatest effect are not the most well-founded ones, but those that could accumulate the suggestive power of a force-idea in themselves, making it a centre of crystallisation, so to speak, for the confused tendencies of an environment. Next to Dryssen, we could cite other Nazi authors, whose affirmations reveal a similar spirit. For instance, Darré,[16] who is a Nazi minister, is the author of a book entitled *Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der nordischen Rasse*,[17] a book that has created a furore in Germany and possesses an almost official character. In it, Darré mounts the old hobbyhorses of 'agrarian socialism': the old, passionate denunciations of imperialism, which he claims was never a Nordic principle, and the tired protests against the concept of private property and capitalism. Moreover, Darré did not hesitate to profess the same repudiation of German aristocratic traditions that we have already found in Dryssen in a well-known speech, and goes further by proclaiming not only the Hohenzollerns[18] and the Habsburgs,[19] but even the Hohenstaufens[20] as traitors to the German race.

After all, readers have already found a report on the new, vain ambitions for an anti-Roman and racist law in these pages, a 'social law based on blood'. They may be aware that people no longer speak of Charlemagne in Germany, but instead refer to him as Charles the Frank, who, because he took up the principle of Roman universality, is being blamed for Germany's worst ills.[21] Readers know that Rosenberg actually said that National Socialism's 'Third Reich' does not have its

[16] Richard Walther Darré (1895–1953) was the Minister of Food and Agriculture in the Third Reich from 1933 until 1942, and was also one of the top leaders of the SS. He was one of the primary proponents of the 'blood and soil' concept. Darré pioneered developments in organic farming and conservation.

[17] The Agrarian Class as the Source of Life of the Nordic Race (Munich: J F Lehmanns, 1929). No English version exists.

[18] The House of Hohenzollern is a noble family which contributed many monarchs to Germany, Prussia, and Rumania over the course of nearly a thousand years.

[19] The Habsburgs were the ruling family of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (previously the Austrian Empire), which was a loose confederation of Central European states centred in Vienna.

[20] The Hohenstaufens were a German noble family which produced several of the Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, including Frederick the Great. They ruled over regions of Germany and Sicily.

[21] Charlemagne attempted to convert the Saxons to Christianity, causing them to rebel against him. In October 782, during this war, Charlemagne had 4,500 Saxons massacred in retaliation for casualties they had inflicted upon him. As a consequence, some of the Nazi leadership, especially Himmler and Rosenberg, considered Charlemagne to be an enemy of the Germans.

precedents in the tradition of the old Sacrum Imperium,[22] but rather in the tradition of all the rebels against the Roman and imperial principle, especially Widukind, the Saxon chief and proud enemy of Charlemagne, who was overwhelmed in the tenth century[23] but is now destined to rise victorious in the figure of Adolf Hitler. We could go on for some time with quotations of this type. This is an anti-aristocracy, socialism, an illusory 'Nordic' tradition as pretext for an anti-tradition, an ugly anti-Roman affair that ends in philo-Bolshevism.

All this taken together tells us about the nature of one of the possibilities that Nazism has presented, a negative one, which seems to be gradually losing influence today. It cannot, however, be considered completely bypassed, and at a certain point a decisive stance toward it will have to be taken in the field of practical politics. Given the part that Germany, directly or indirectly, plays in central Europe, since the face that Germany will ultimately present cannot be a matter of indifference toward the overall development of the culture of our continent, we can only hope that overcoming similar tendencies may be accomplished rapidly and decisively. In Italy we have our own precise way, which has nothing in common with either the Freemasonic, democratic, and liberal West, or with the Bolshevising and socialistic 'East'. It is not up to us, but to Germany herself and the role she could still play in the future, to formulate the hope that her best forces can lead her beyond this paralysing opposition and onto the road to a real reconstruction.

[22] The Latin form of the Holy Roman Empire.

[23] He actually lived in the eighth century.

On the Differences between the Fascist and Nazi Conception of the State

(April 1941)

As many people know, one point where the Fascist conception differs from the National Socialist one concerns the idea of the state in its relation to the idea of the nation. The goal of these notes is to characterise this difference, to see to what point it is real and finally to examine and clarify the viewpoint from which a real or possible difference can be overcome. Naturally, this is a question of a simple contribution to a complicated problem, which deserves a fuller treatment.

Fascism affirms the 'moral personality' of the state and the priority of the state before the nation. We can refer to well-known expressions of the Duce himself: 'Fascism reaffirms the State as the only true expression of the individual'; 'for the Fascist, all is comprised in the State and spiritual or human exists — much less has any value — outside the State'; 'the nation does not beget the State, according to the decrepit naturalistic concept which was used as a basis for the publicists of the national states in the Nineteenth century. On the contrary, the nation is created by the State, which gives the people, conscious of their own moral unity, the will, and thereby an effective existence'; 'The Fascist state organises the nation'.[1]

About the 'people' so dear to democratic ideology, Mussolini speaks as of a 'mysterious entity', in the sense of a myth, of something flimsy and unreliable. This is why he says that 'regimes can be called democratic which, from time to time, give the people the illusion of being sovereign, whereas the real and effective sovereignty exists in other, and very often secret and irresponsible forces'.[2] Finally, Mussolini reaffirms the spirituality of the state: 'The State as conceived and enacted by Fascism is a spiritual and moral fact since it gives concrete form to the political, juridical and economical organization of the country. Furthermore this organization as it rises and develops, is a manifestation of the spirit'.[3] 'The State, inasmuch as it transcends the short limits of individual lives, represents the immanent conscience of the

[1] 'The Doctrine of Fascism', pp. 29–30, 43.
[2] Ibid., p. 37.
[3] Ibid., p. 41.

nation.'[4] 'The Fascist State, the highest and the most powerful form of personality is a force, but a spiritual one. It reassumes all the forms of the moral and intellectual life of man.'[5] In this sense, Mussolini speaks of the state as of a form of the nation's 'entelechy'.' It is the 'soul of the soul'. 'It is inner form and norm.'

We have intentionally taken these expressions from Mussolini's 'Doctrine of Fascism'.[6] It is therefore a question of fundamental official views, not of phrases taken from speeches delivered on one occasion or another.

Passing now to the National Socialist conception, we shall refer equally directly to the words of Hitler that are contained in *Mein Kampf*. It is necessary, however, to make an etymological preface concerning the meaning of the German word *Volk*, a word that has various connotations. It can mean nation, people, stock, and even race. 'People as race' would perhaps be the most suitable translation. In contrast with the Fascist conception, the National Socialist one is characterised by an emphasis given to the *Volk*, the people, and the race, as opposed to the state. Hitler writes, '[T]he State is not an end in itself but the means to an end. It is the preliminary condition under which alone a higher form of human civilization can be developed, but it is not the source of such a development. This is to be sought exclusively in the actual existence of a race which is endowed with the gift of cultural creativeness. There may be hundreds of excellent States on this earth, and yet if the Aryan, who is the creator and custodian of civilization, should disappear, all culture that is on an adequate level with the spiritual needs of the superior nations today would also disappear.'[7] 'We must make a clear-cut distinction between the vessel and its contents. The State is only the vessel and the race is what it contains.'[8] Hitler continues, 'The vessel can have a meaning only if it preserves and safeguards the contents. Otherwise it is worthless. Hence the supreme purpose of the ethnical State is to guard and preserve those racial elements which, through their work in the cultural field, create that beauty and dignity which are characteristic of a higher mankind.'[9] On the other hand, a state can be described as not corresponding to its mission, and therefore evil, when, 'in spite of

[4] Ibid., p. 42.

[5] Ibid., p. 31.

[6] In 1932 an article, 'The Doctrine of Fascism', was published under Mussolini's name. This was an official article which was composed by the philosopher Giovanni Gentile and approved by Mussolini and published in the Enciclopedia Italiana 14, and which was included in Mussolini's Opera Omnia, volume 34. It has been regarded as the most definitive statement of Italian Fascist doctrine.

[7] Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, translated by James Murphy (London: Hutchinson, 1939), p. 211.

[8] Ibid., p. 213.

[9] Ibid., p. 213.

the existence of a high cultural level, it dooms to destruction the bearers of that culture by breaking up their racial uniformity'.[10]

Here, naturally, we can notice a certain repositioning of the problem. It is less a question of the state *per se* than of the human material destined to play the most important part in it. In all events, the negation of the personality of the state is clear here, since it is conceived as the simple tool of the *Volk*, the people-race. This negation is reflected in the lack of a true authority, raised high over the nation. *Dux*[11] and *Führer* are usually considered as analogous expressions. They are analogous from the etymological viewpoint, because the Latin *ducere*, from which *Dux* comes, corresponds to German *führen*, from which *Führer*. There is, however, a difference.

Let us disregard the fact that the Fascist *Dux* is the head of the government, not the head of state, since this latter function belongs to the monarchy, which represents the stability and continuity of the government, of the stock, and tradition. Even ignoring this fact, the *Führer* is rather different from the *Dux* because he has the authority — literally — of a 'guide'. He is less someone who dominates and more someone who guides or directs. He is less someone who creates than someone who interprets and stands at the head of a 'people', assuming this function almost through a mandate and common agreement. *Die Weihe des Führertums ist das Volk*.[12] This phrase characterises this state of affairs: the *Führer* draws his legitimacy and authority from the *Volk*. This is why in Italy — with good reason — the word 'socialism' always preserves a suspect and unpleasant connotation, which it does not have in Germany, where it figures in the name of the Party, which is called — let us not forget it — National Socialist, i.e., national and socialist.

It is worthwhile to examine this difference between the two ideologies in the area of law. Point 19 of the Nazi Party's platform contains the following words: 'We ask that a German common law replace Roman law, the slave of a materialistic world order.'[13] In order to understand what 'Roman law' means here, we refer to the view

[10] Ibid.

[11] Latin: 'duke'.

[12] 'The people is the consecration of leadership.'

[13] This comes from the '25 Points' that were announced as the fledgling Party's programme by Hitler on 24 February 1920. Although never officially abrogated, most of its points were forgotten after the Party took power.

of Helmut Nicolai.[14] For Nicolai, Rome at its origins acknowledged a law still permeated with virility and ethical responsibility, but the mixing of blood and races in an ethnic chaos took place in Rome's first period. On top of this now ruined substance, covered with Levantines, Africans, and Metics,[15] rose the Roman *imperium* like an enormous, soulless state machine. Next to it, no longer possessing any connection with blood, 'Roman law' took form. This 'Roman' law is therefore supposed to rest on a political unity that is foreign to peoples and rules them from outside. It developed on positivistic, rationalistic, and universalistic bases, with abstract formulations of laws as rigid in the letter as they were arbitrary and easy to disregard in any practical terms. 'In the Roman juridical conception' — Nicolai continues — 'law is what the arbitrarily discriminating power of the state decrees. In the racist conception, on the other hand, law is an eternal ethical greatness that stands above the powers of the state and cannot be changed by the state. In the Roman conception, right is what stands in the law — *positum*, whence "positivism". In the racist conception, law is only what conforms to an eternal juridical idea. In the first conception, what can be justified with the letter is legal; form yields place to content. The star that guides us in the first is conformity to paragraphs; in the second it is conscience.' Naturally, it is not a question of the consciousness of natural law, which is general and equal for all, but a consciousness that is differentiated and conditioned by race.

Let us therefore return to race as the source of juridical forms, and so also of whatever 'positive' element exists in the state structure. The consequence is a curious interaction between law and racism — racism as race hygiene. This is the reason for the motto: *Verteidigung der Rasse durch das Recht* — that is, defence of the race by means of the law. Already in 1926, the German Minister of Justice, Hans Frank, proclaimed as law 'everything that works for the advantage of the *Volk*, the people-race' and as 'anti-law everything that is harmful to it'. Falk Ruttke[16] goes even further. 'More than defending the race by means of law, it is a question of consolidating and

[14] Helmut Nicolai (1895–1955) was a German lawyer who was a member of the Nazi Party and who was prominent in the early years of Nazi rule, especially in drafting the Nuremberg racial laws. He drew the ire of the Party in 1935, however, when he suggested that the power of the Führer should be limited by a council and that the Nazi Party should dissolve itself once its tasks had been completed. He was charged with treason, but, confessing to his crimes, was pardoned, but was excluded from all political or Party offices.

[15] Metics were people who resided in the city-state of Athens but who were not Athenian citizens.

[16] Falk Ruttke (1894–1955) was a German jurist who helped to draft the Nazi eugenics laws.

reinforcing German blood with respect to the theory of race and heredity', since, by speaking this way, the active element of the measures to be taken would be much more prominent than a purely defensive one. This point is a logical consequence of removing the positive element from the idea of law. Alfred Rosenberg had already mentioned this ancient Indo-Aryan expression: 'Law and unlaw do not walk around and say: We are this. Law is what Aryan men discover to be right.'[17] He then added, 'This is an allusion to a primordial wisdom forgotten in the present day that law is a blood related scheme. It is a system of religion and art. It is linked for eternity to a certain blood with which it appears and with which it passes away.'[18] From this viewpoint, Ruttke is right when he says that it is not up to the law to defend the race, but rather from the reintegration of the race the reintegration of the law must follow. Only the man who is pure of race will be able to have the right sense of the law — naturally, not law in general, but the law that is adapted to the people to which he belongs.

In these terms, there would seem to be a real difference concerning the views of Fascism and National Socialism on the state and law. Is it a question of an antithesis, or of differences that allow the possibility of a reciprocal integration and deepening of both viewpoints?

We have already mentioned the part changing perspectives play in such differences. The Nazi conception can be said to proceed from the viewpoint of a revolution still taking place, while the Fascist conception rather suggests the viewpoint of a revolution that is already consolidated, and so intent on giving life to lasting and stable forms.

We note that both viewpoints are opposed to the purely juridical conception of sovereignty. As Costamagna[19] has mentioned in this journal, a juridical conception differs from a political conception by its no longer attributing sovereignty to a man or a group of men, but to the so-called independent entity that wants to be acknowledged in the personality of the state. Basically, the juridical doctrine has been accepted because it claims to lead to an impersonal solution of the problem of power,

[17] Alfred Rosenberg, The Myth of the Twentieth Century (Torrance, California: Noontide Press, 1982), p. 126.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Carlo Costamagna (1881–1965) was a Fascist intellectual who published the political journal, Lo Stato (The State), to which Evola contributed. He was also one of the signatories of the 1938 Race Manifesto of Fascism. Costamagna argued that the state should not rely on force to obtain the loyalty of its subjects, but rather should become the moral example for the people to follow.

and because it presented the advantage that the holder of power, whoever he might be, could not claim to exercise power on its own account, but rather in the interest of the society, so that its own possession of power becomes illegitimate when it loses sight of its goal. But even with this interpretation, which is of a democratic complexion and which has been added by Michoud,[20] there still remains the problem of the *form* of a given juridical system, a problem that constitutes the eternal stumbling block of the formalistic and positive conception of law. It still poses, that is, the problem that relates to law's *principium individuationis*,[21] of the 'sufficient reason' through which law and, finally, the state itself have one given form and not another in its actual structure.

National Socialism particularly emphasises the forces that determine this form, which cannot fall from heaven (at least where it is no longer a question of traditional cultures in the higher sense), but which is created by men and races of men. From this viewpoint it is correct to say that the state and law represent something secondary in respect to the quality of the men who are their creators. Laws are good to the extent that they remain forms that adhere to the original demands and tools fitted to strengthen and confirm those forces that have awakened them to life. This, however, is also the Fascist viewpoint.

Fascism certainly does not accept as its own either the view of an impersonal 'juridical sovereignty' or that of 'Roman law' as the National Socialists interpret it, however abusively. The state whose sovereignty and primacy Fascism proclaims is not something abstract or automatic. To prove this is the fact that, apart from the supreme reference point, the source of all legitimacy that is constituted by the monarchy (which, however, is itself not impersonal and abstract, but a supremely personalised reality) — apart from this, behind the Fascist state stands the Fascist movement and party, and this state is the revolutionary state, that is, the state renewed by Fascism.

If we want to find differences, the problem would therefore have to be moved to another level. Since both National Socialism and Fascism acknowledge a *dynamis*, a deep force that establishes and animates the state and is the deep principle of its authority and sovereignty, it is a question of defining the nature attributed in both cases to this *dynamis*, or *ratio existentiae*,[22] so to speak, of the state in its concreteness.

[20] Léon Michoud (1855–1916) was a French jurist who specialised in administrative law.

[21] Latin: 'principle of individuation', by which a thing is distinguished from other things.

[22] Latin: 'sufficient reason'. In some philosophical doctrines, the idea of sufficient reason stipulates that everything that exists has a reason for doing so.

The 'myth' of National Socialism, in this respect, is the race or race-people, as we have seen. It is a question here of understanding what is meant and not being satisfied with simple words.

Let us return to Mussolini's 'Doctrine of Fascism', and precisely to the ninth paragraph of the first part. Having already described the people as a 'mysterious entity', Mussolini repeats that 'Fascism for this reason is opposed to the democracy which identifies peoples with the greatest number of individuals and reduces them to a majority level'.[23] He affirms, on the other hand, a qualitative conception, a conception of the 'most coherent and truest form and is therefore the most moral, because it sees a people realised in the consciousness and will of the few or even of one only; an ideal which moves to its realisation in the consciousness and will of all. By "all" is meant all who derive their justification as a nation, ethnically speaking, from their nature and history, and who follow the same line of spiritual formation and development as one single will and consciousness'. Mussolini adds, 'not as a race nor as a geographically determined region, but as a progeny that is rather the outcome of a history which perpetuates itself; a multitude unified by an idea embodied in the will to have power and to exist, conscious of itself and of its personality'. He concludes, 'This higher personality is truly the nation, inasmuch as it is the State.'[24]

Does this confirm the difference between the two movements, especially and specifically with reference to race? We do not believe so. Fascism too has claimed racism, but not, however, the racism that is a myth with a zoological base. Nor should race mean for us, through an unfair interpretation, a new way for the democratic deviation or socialising ideologies to appear.

The nation and the state cannot be 'race' in the naturalistic sense, as has been affirmed not only by Mussolini but also by the most intransigent German racists, because they recognise precisely and without difficulty that all nations corresponding to today's states are not 'races', but mixtures of different races. Mussolini's view is as follows: there is a generic quality that can be called 'nation' or even 'nation-race', which is not purely anthropological and is found diffused in all components of a given political unity, so to speak, in different quantities and amounts. This makes it possible to think that, while in some it is latent and obstructed, in others it is more actual, more self-conscious, and more realised, until it becomes absolute and pure in an elite or a leader, and is manifested as precise consciousness and precise will to power and life.

[23] 'The Doctrine of Fascism', p. 30.
[24] Ibid.

In a current with a base that is also ethnic and racial, as stock, and defined by the same line of spiritual development and formation, this elite then becomes the central and dominating thread, the element that transforms and reawakens and, concerning other parts, is the soul as an animating force that is also formative and which provides the body's self-awareness. The state's sovereignty and its priority in respect to the 'people' and the nation are symbols for this action of the elite and a chief.

Does a fundamental difference exist in these terms between the Fascist idea and the National Socialist one? The difference is not fundamental, unless we make of race, on which National Socialism insists so much, a mythic entity, like the democratic 'people' Mussolini speaks of so ironically. Even concerning Germany, what does race basically mean? We just now mentioned that German racists admit that even their own people is a mixture of races. Some will say that it is not a question of race in general, but of the Aryan race and then, actually, the Nordic race. In fact, Hitler talks about the Aryan race as the creator of cultures, and more specifically he thinks that the Nordic race — one of the six principle races contained in the German mixture — has this quality to an eminent degree. But here too it is necessary to get to the bottom of the matter. The Aryan quality is the requirement for full German citizenship, for being the *Volksgenosse* or 'stock companion', who enjoys all civil and political rights as opposed to being a simple member of the German state, a *Staatsangehöriger*.[25] This 'Aryan' quality is defined in purely negative terms. To possess it, it is enough to be not entirely Hebrew, or to be from the races of colour, nor to have the blood of these races in one's own ancestors as far as the third generation back. At best, a clause has been added which insists on one not having any hereditary illnesses that would provoke sterilisation, or to show those congenital inclinations that are defined in Germany as the so-called 'asocial' qualities. But all these traits are too insignificant for purity of race. Is this enough only because there is direct evidence of what is true law, beyond every 'positive' law and because it is possible to contribute to the highest spiritual elevation of the state?

Should we speak, instead of Aryan in general, rather of 'Nordic'? Then we shall have to pose the problem of selection, since the German race is not composed of Nordic elements alone, as conversely Nordic elements are found in other nations that are not German. No one in Germany is so radical as to draw all the conclusions that follow from the thesis that the Nordic race is the superior one, which would mean that only members of this race could be entrusted with either the administration of

[25] 'Citizen'.

law or the work of the development of the National Socialist state. Even if the supreme hierarchies of this state are composed of 'Aryan' elements, they are certainly not composed exclusively, at least so far, of purely Nordic elements.

There is another point. In a speech he delivered in 1933 in Nuremberg, Hitler correctly acknowledged that the Nordic physical form can be found without the corresponding spiritual elements, so that, in this respect, the final criterion must be given by examining the attitude of soul and spirit, of character, and of works. He is admitting discrimination within the Nordic element itself. Finally, we should recall the assertion of one of the best-known German racists and supporters of the Nordic thesis, L F Clauss,[26] who has acknowledged that racial purity should not be conceived in terms of the collectivity, that is, numerically and statistically, but rather in terms of purity of type. Even if all the individuals of a given ethnic group can be called Nordic in a general sense, only a few are truly Nordic and manifest this race in a pure and perfect form.

These statements correspond almost to the letter with Mussolini's, when he talks about an idea that 'is realised in the consciousness and will of the few', although 'an ideal which moves to its realisation in the consciousness and will of all'.[27] Some will point out that there is an explicit reference to race in National Socialism. This is true. But, as we have said just now, Hitler himself ends up acknowledging that, when all is said and done, the true and decisive criterion of race must be sought in the spiritual element. This is why an in-depth examination 'race' as found in Nazi political ideology will conclude that it is a simple myth which corresponds to no precise reality, with the meaning more or less of a synonym for a people liberated from Hebrew and half-breed elements, and separated from its own pathologically doomed factions. Otherwise, it refers to the elites which create states and give form to nations, more or less, which is what Fascism is talking about.

Despite this, it is certain that National Socialism gives a special emphasis to the biological element, on the one hand, and to the values of loyalty, honour, and a direct

[26] Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss (1892–1974) was a German ethnologist who had been a student of Edmund Husserl. His idea that race was more a matter of the spirit than of biology, although still classifiable, was quite influential upon Evola. He travelled extensively in the Middle East, studying Arab culture, and he became a Muslim. Although initially hailed by the National Socialists for his advocacy of the superiority of the Nordic soul, he later fell out of favour with them since his racial theories were at odds with the Nazis' purely material definition of race, and his work was banned by them in 1942. Clauss further opposed them in more practical terms by hiding a Jewish colleague in a hidden room in his house, thus rescuing her from deportation, a deed for which he was posthumously lionised by the state of Israel.

[27] 'The Doctrine of Fascism', p. 30.

and anti-bureaucratic dependence between men and men and leaders and followers on the other, limiting everything that is formalistic juridical legalism with precise political interventions. This difference, however, will tend to become increasingly attenuated after Fascism, too, has officially laid claim to the racist idea. If it follows this idea coherently, analogous values will gradually become significant among us as well, a development that will only be a benefit for our revolution, which has been blocked in so many sectors by 'positivistic', 'officious', and intellectualistic dross, and by a style, disregarding the race of the body, we cannot always call 'Aryan'.

On the other hand, it is undeniable that the National Socialism of fascist ideology will be able to receive more than one stimulus to pass from the dynamic phase, of which its views still betray the influence, to a more 'classic' phase, in which attention will be paid most especially to the objective conditions for the definition of a stable and, in its own way, 'positive' order, freed from circumstances and revolutionary developments. Perhaps the consequences of the war, once it has been won, by the very fact of assuring to Germany its vital space, will permit the marginalising of certain excuses for socialisation, in which the ideology of our ally still indulges at times for tactical reasons and for the purposes of internal propaganda. Hopefully it will encourage her to come to a clearer and more Roman conception — but at the same time more consistent with the best German tradition — of the function of dominion and *ducere*.

Hitler's Table Talks

(19 March 1953)

The Italian publisher Longanesi has recently published a book entitled *Hitler's Table Talks*[1] that is advertised as presenting material which casts light on the figure of the *Führer* from a more direct and personal point of view than can be found in his various political speeches and his chief work, *Mein Kampf*.

It should be observed that these are notes taken down on everything significant that Hitler had to say on rather diverse topics during his conversations at dinner with his closest collaborators, especially at his Headquarters. These notes, however, were authorised and, indeed, extensively revised by Hitler himself because, as his *ipse dixit*,[2] they were eventually intended to serve as an orientation and directives concerning the subjects they treated. Moreover, it is important to remember — as noted in its Foreword — that, even at dinner, Hitler felt as though he were on a podium, and so the material we read here does not present a truly intimate and spontaneous character. Certainly, this book reveals various aspects of Hitler's persona, mentality, and worldview with great crudeness and, let us say it right away, the revelations are not at all to Hitler's advantage.

The notes refer to the period from the middle of 1941 into the following year — the period of the German military apogee, before the setback in Russia and before El Alamein, the period when the dream of Germany's continental dominion over Europe seemed very close to being realised. First of all, Hitler's views on the organisation of the future Reich are very perplexing. Everything is conceived in a crudely realistic form, technocratic and bureaucratic, 'modern', let us say, in the worst sense of the word. There is no truly spiritual reference, but a violent will to power in various artificial aspects, as when he plans a status for various populations, like the Russians, aimed at scientifically fomenting their cultural and even physical inferiority in contrast to the German groups that are meant to colonise, exploit, and dominate their lands.

The myth of the superior race is naturally the basis of such opinions, but it is the myth as it might be conceived by a dilettante, who is satisfied with vague formulations

[1] Hitler's Table Talk, 1941-44: His Private Conversations (New York: Enigma, 2000).

[2] Latin: 'he himself said it'.

for use as simple political tools, which end up compromising what might be correct in anti-democratic doctrines. If Himmler still had a more or less precise idea in referring to the Nordic race in the strict sense, Hitler, by taking into account what is, in general, German and 'Germanic' for the most part, is not dealing so much with racism as with an inflamed nationalism. It is in fact well-known that the Germanic is a conglomerate of difference races, whose superiority to other national conglomerates is therefore more or less problematic.

If Hitler does not go beyond the horizons and sensibility of a mediocre bourgeois with a taste for Wagner in his tastes and evaluations concerning the world of art, in what concerns religion, the Church, the monarchical and dynastic idea, and the traditional nobility, it must be said that he absolutely sinks to the level of the brutality and vulgarity of a socialist proletarian in these conversations. He almost ends up defining religion, like Marx, as an opium of the people, as a means of exploitation, and as something obscurantist which the progress of science will little by little cause to disappear, to the great benefit of a regimented national community turned to purely temporal greatness.

It is well-known how recurrent Hitler's references to Providence were, whose designate, protector, and executor he felt himself to be. It is difficult to understand what this Providence could mean for Hitler, when, on the one hand, he recognises the right of the stronger as the supreme law of life with Darwinian triviality, while, on the other hand, he excludes any supernatural intervention or order as superstition, and asserts 'the impotence of man before the eternal law of nature', as in the most obsolete and outdated scientism.

There is no lack of interesting and intelligent observations on various concrete problems in this book. The general atmosphere, however, is very different from the one that could correspond to a true leader, and who could be legitimately invested with absolute authority.

Ritter,[3] who was in charge of the German edition of the work, writes at the end of his Introduction that the lesson to be learned from it is that the reason for the defeat was not the superiority of the enemy's war potential, nor the delay in preparing a secret weapon, and not even the presumed sabotage by the forces of the resistance. 'The man himself and his system carried in themselves their condemnation.' Despite

[3] Gerhard Ritter (1888–1967) was a historian, a monarchist, and a German nationalist. Initially a supporter of the Nazis, he later became an ardent opponent, and was arrested for his participation in the 1944 assassination attempt against Hitler. After the war he continued to defend and promote German nationalism by attempting to separate it from the Nazi legacy.

all that we have said in this review, we do not agree with these words. It is strange that a German would say them. A German ought to know that Hitler essentially acted as a centre of crystallisation for very diverse forces, which were united under the sign of the swastika only in order to confront unavoidable problems of internal and external politics. These forces were in no way crated by National Socialism, but received their form from an earlier, higher tradition. System and ideas should not be confused with bogus imitations and traits due to contingent factors. Many Germans did not commit this confusion and were united with Hitler only in the name of Germany, or rather of Europe, while waiting for an eventual process of clarification and rectification that the purely military factor was doomed to cut short.

A History of the Third Reich

(1962)

The publisher Einaudi has recently published a large book entitled *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany*.[1] Since another work on the same topic by an English author, well documented and written with a certain impartiality, was published a little while ago by an important Milanese publisher,[2] the need for this new book is not obvious, had it not been for its decisively partisan character and the corresponding contribution that it makes to the deformation of recent history.

The book's author is one W L Shirer,[3] an ordinary American journalist of the most irritating and presumptuous type, who lived in Europe for a little more than twenty years, without having done any serious research, as a reporter. When he returned to America after the war, he began attacking the anti-Communist politics of the America Right after the Korean War with such animosity that he was fired by the radio station which he had been working for. He retired to the country, and to console himself, he started writing this book. According to the Introduction to the Einaudi edition, over one and a half million copies have been sold in America.

The most pernicious trait of the book is found in its apparatus of sources, which, along with some truths mixed with mystifications, might make an impression on the inexperienced reader. The documentation comes, first of all, from the notorious trials of the Nazi leaders conducted by the Allies. Even American jurists have come around to acknowledging their absurdity and questionable procedure. Shirer also used diaries and the archives of the German government and the army, which the

[1] William L Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960).

[2] Evola is likely referring to Alan Bullock's Hitler, a Study in Tyranny (London: Odhams Press, 1952), which was published by Mondadori in Milan in 1955.

[3] William L Shirer (1904–1993) was a journalist who began covering Germany for American newspapers in the early 1930s. He was hired by Edward Murrow for CBS in 1938, and his first reportage was on Germany's annexation of Austria. He continued to report on the Third Reich, even into the early years of the Second World War, departing Germany in December 1940. In 1944 Shirer became one of the directors of the Society for the Prevention of World War III, which advocated for harsh peace terms with Germany in order to prevent her from ever becoming a military power again. Blacklisted for his Communist sympathies in 1950, he did little after the war apart from write this book.

Americans sequestered, and so these records were exposed to every sort of manipulation and arbitrary, unchecked misuse. In his Preface, Shirer confesses, 'No doubt my own prejudices, which inevitably spring from my experience and make-up, creep through the pages of this book from time to time', because 'I detest totalitarian dictatorships in principle'.[4] How, then, can he claim at the same time to be 'severely objective, letting the facts speak for themselves and noting the source for each'?[5] Everyone knows that facts and sources never speak for themselves. Everything depends on choosing them and the light in which they are placed. In this case, the light is very much from the Left.

Shirer's animosity is seen (not least) in his delight in trivial epithets that would repel any serious historian: the 'fat' and 'effeminate Field Marshal' (Goering), the 'oily hack' (Rosenberg), the 'arrogant' and 'insufferable' Ribbentrop, the 'drunken stutterer' (Ley), the 'sawdust Roman Caesar', the 'big breasted' (or 'bloated') Italian dictator (Mussolini), aside from the recurring and insulting use of the term 'gangster' (not always kept in the Italian translation) for the leaders of the Third Reich: a rather imprudent insult, since Hitler had already emphasised that this term was created in America to describe a phenomenon for which America can take full credit.

There is no need to point out that Shirer, who detests 'totalitarian dictators in principle', casts an indulgent veil over the Soviet version, as he does not speak of the horrors committed by the Communist regime and the Red Army as soon as they had the upper hand. It is significant that he writes in the Introduction that he sees in the Third Reich 'the last of the empires which set out on the path taken earlier by France, Rome and Macedonia',[6] placing Hitler on the same level as Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon. This association, while it values Hitler more than his due, reveals the bitter contempt which this journalist and radio broadcaster from the United States has for the greatest figures of European history.

There is no room here to detail all the elements that are misrepresented and downright falsified in this book. What Shirer says about the 'Intellectual Roots of the Third Reich' demonstrates, for instance, a ridiculous lack of culture and an unbelievable puerility. This is especially serious, given the great importance of distinguishing the valid elements presented by the German tradition (thanks to Germany's having been largely spared the influence of the subversive ideologies of

[4] The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, p. xii.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

the Third Estate).[7] These elements continued to exist in Nazism (often *despite* Nazism), and constituted the positive aspect of the Third Reich. Of incidents that Shirer makes up out of whole cloth, let us limit ourselves to a few concerning Italy, since Shirer seems to despise Fascism and Mussolini even more than he does Hitler. He systematically denigrates the Italian army. For instance, the 'headlong flight of the Italians', who 'were seized by panic', is supposed to be the cause of the final German surrender in Russia. When did Mussolini ever have to combat 'anti-German demonstrations that broke out all over Italy' in 1943? When were there ever, in 1943, 'mass strikes in the industrial cities of Milan and Turin, where the hungry [!!!] workers had demonstrated for "bread, peace, and freedom"? (The fact is, during the Salò Republic, the industry of northern Italy functioned with perfect discipline and efficiency.) What led him to write that Mussolini 'was completely taken by surprise when, on the evening of July 25, he was summoned to the royal palace by the king, summarily dismissed from office, and carted off under arrest in an ambulance to a police station'? (The fact is, it was Mussolini who presented himself to the King and offered him his resignation.) And so on and so forth. From these few specimens one can imagine Shirer's 'scrupulousness' and 'objectivity' in many other affairs concerning Germany.

In the chapter on 'The New Order', Shirer can only repeat the old stories about atrocities, persecutions, concentration camps, the Gestapo, and so on. He implies that the world had only to expect such things from the 'New Order' in the event of an Axis victory. He does not mention the positive initiatives that the new Germany had undertaken, and skims over them in other chapters in an inadequate and disparaging fashion. The agrarian legislation for the defence and 'dignifying' of farmers, for their loyalty to land and lineage against urban proletarianisation and financial exploitation; the reconstruction of the economy with the elimination of class warfare and a new, organic, and personalised unity of the forces of labour in factories; the so-called *Ordensstaatsgedanke*,[8] that is, the ideal of a stable and anti-democratic state, protected from politics as usual and party manoeuvring, supported by something like an 'Order' (like the old Order of Teutonic Knights, the original root of the Prussian ethic), and so on — these are some of the positive elements, which are not so much

[7] In pre-Revolutionary France, the general assembly of the French government was divided into three States-General: the clergy (First), the nobles (Second), and the commoners (Third).

[8] In The Path of Cinnabar, Evola defines Ordensstaatsgedanke as 'a state based not on a democratic "leadership" but on an Order — an elite founded on an ideal, a tradition, an austere discipline and a common lifestyle' (p. 155).

due to the Nazis as they were reclaimed from an earlier and higher tradition and, if applied in the right way, could have demonstrated their salutary rectifying force in today's world. It is possible that, had a process of purification been attempted, they would have proven superior to all the problematic and negative elements presented by Nazism (or, rather, Hitlerism), the existence of which we are far from denying.

As for the 'horrors', persecutions, and so on — when they did occur — it is well to speak clearly. History and revolutions have always offered numerous examples. No one talks about the cruelties committed by the 'chosen people' during the conquest of the 'promised land', and the massacre the traditional feast of Purim still commemorates,[9] nor about the Catholic wars of religion at the start of the modern era, or the Terror in France, or the massacres of the Communist revolution and its regime. Instead, the Third Reich is made a unique and unprecedented case.

Let us say without mincing words that no price would have been too high to pay if a different outcome of the Second World War, that is, the victory of the Tripartite Pact, the Axis, had had the following consequences: breaking the back of Soviet power, probably liberating Russia from Communism and preserving all of eastern Europe from its domination; humiliating England and expelling the United States from European, if not global, politics; preventing the danger posed by Communist China, since the victory of Japan would have certainly made the rise of Mao impossible; in the climate of the 'New Order' various colonies would have probably changed patron, but there would have been men with a steady pulse to defend European prestige and block the rising of the peoples of colour[10] and prevent the formation of one of the virulent sources of the crisis of a world that essentially owes its current fearful insecurity to what Churchill himself acknowledged, with tardy repentance, in the lapidary phrase: 'We have slain the wrong pig',[11] alluding to the Third Reich, instead of the Soviet Union.

[9] In the Book of Esther, it says that a vizier named Haman had made plans to have all the Jews residing in the Persian Empire killed because the Jewish aristocrat Mordecai refused to bow down to him, casting lots, or purim, to determine the date of the massacre. The Jews manage to win the support of the Persian King, and Haman is killed, after which the King grants the Jews permission to kill anyone who poses a threat to them, leading to the massacre of more than 75,000 people. Purim thus celebrates this change of fortunes.

[10] Here, the editors of Il Nazionale added, 'or at least their premature and uncontrolled <rising>'.

[11] This is a comment widely attributed to Churchill, but where, when, or even if he actually said it remains undetermined.

Finally, the journalist Shirer's book is published by Einaudi in its series, the *Library of Historical Culture*. It is an edifying example of how the culture of 'free' Italy is manipulated with ample means.

Hitler and the Secret Societies

(October 1971)

It is curious that various French authors have devoted themselves to researching the relationship of German National Socialism with secret societies and initiatory organizations that are supposed to have inspired Nazism. They have even posited an 'occult background' to the Hitler movement. This thesis was first presented in the well-known book, rich in digressions, by Louis Pauwels[1] and Jacques Bergier,[2] *The Morning of the Magicians*.[3] The book defined National Socialism in terms of a union of 'magical thought' with scientific technology, and finally ends up producing a formula for it: 'battleships + René Guénon,'[4] a formula that would have made that eminent exponent of traditional thought and the esoteric disciplines spin in his grave.

The book is marred by a serious mistake, because it frequently confuses the magical element with the mythic one, although the two have nothing to do with one another. It is undeniable that 'myths' played an important role in National Socialism: the Great Reich, the charismatic Leader, race and blood, and so on. Here, however, it is necessary to give to the word 'myth' its plain, Sorelian[5] sense of a 'force-idea', an idea as a motivating force, endowed with a special suggestive power (as, in general, is true of the myths used by demagogy) with no 'magical' implication. Thus, for instance, no one will think it is reasonable to attribute a 'magical' element to the myths used by

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[1] Louis Pauwels (1920–1997) was a French author and journalist, and a follower of Gurdjieff, who became known in the 1960s as a writer and publisher of popular writings on occult matters and science fiction. In 1978 he began publishing the Figaro-Magazine, which became a forum for French New Right thinkers such as Alain de Benoist.

[2] Jacques Bergier (1912–1978) was a Russian Jew whose family fled to France following the Russian Revolution. He conducted research into nuclear physics, and then was active in the French Resistance. By the late 1950s, he had joined his friend, Louis Pauwels, in his publishing efforts. They wrote several popular books on occult topics together.

[3] The Morning of the Magicians (New York: Stein & Day, 1964).

[4] In the English edition of the book, the passage reads 'Hitlerism, in a sense, was "Guénonism" plus tanks.' From The Morning of the Magicians, p. 180.

[5] Georges Sorel (1847–1922) was a French philosopher who began as a Marxist and later developed Revolutionary Syndicalism. He advocated the use of myth and organised violence in revolutionary movements. He was influential upon both the Communist and Fascist movements.

Fascism, such as the myths of Rome and the Leader, or to the myths used by the French or the Communist revolutions.

The discourse would be different when dealing with the influences of an order that is not simply human, which certain movements might have obeyed without realising it. There is no question of this, however, in the view of the French authors we have mentioned. They are not thinking of influences like this, but of concrete influences exercised by organisations that are real, although, to one degree or another, 'secret'. They even speak of 'Unknown Superiors' who are supposed to have raised up the Nazi movement and made use of Hitler as their medium. It is not clear, however, what their goal was in doing so. To judge by the results, that is, the catastrophic consequences of National Socialism, even if indirectly, for Europe, we would have to think of dark and destructive ends, which would go against the thesis of those who would like to relate the occult side of that movement to what Guénon called 'counter-initiation'. The French writers we have mentioned have proposed another thesis, which is that the medium Hitler emancipated himself from the 'Unknown Superiors' at a certain moment, like a Golem, and from that point on the Nazi movement went off in a fatal direction. In this case, however, it really must be said that these occult Superiors had possession of very limited foresight and powers, if they could not block someone they had used as their medium.

On a more concrete level, there has been much imagination expended on the origins of the essential themes and symbols of National Socialism with reference to pre-existing organisations, but to which, however, it is difficult to attribute an authentic and regular initiatory character. There is no doubt that Hitler did not invent Germanic racist ideology, the symbol of the swastika, or Aryan anti-Semitism, all of which had existed for quite some time in Germany. A book entitled *Der Mann, der Hitler die Ideen Gab*[6] speaks of Lanz von Liebenfels (the noble *von* was self-bestowed), an ex-Cistercian monk, who founded an order that used the swastika, and published a journal, *Ostara*, from 1905, and which Hitler certainly knew, in which Aryan racist and anti-Semitic theses were clearly articulated.

Much more relevant to the occult background of National Socialism is the role attributed to the Thule-Gesellschaft ('Thule Society').[7] Here matters become more

[6] Wilfried Daim, The Man Who Gave Hitler his Ideas: Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels (Munich: Isar, 1958). No English edition exists.

[7] The Thule Society was established in Munich in 1918, and sponsored the formation of the German Workers' Party, which later became Hitler's National Socialist German Workers' Party, in January 1919. However, Hitler severed the Party's links with the Society by the early 1920s, and there is little indication

complicated. This society was the offspring of a pre-existing Germanenorden ('Order of Germans'), which was founded in 1912 and headed by Rudolf von Sebottendorff.[8] Von Sebottendorff had lived in the East, and in 1924 he published a strange volume on the *Die Praxis der alten Türkischen Freimaurerei*,[9] in which he described procedures based on the repetition of syllables, symbols, gestures, and 'paces', the purpose of which was the initiatory transformation of the human being which is also sought in alchemy. It is not clear which Turkish 'Freemasonic' organisations von Sebottendorff was in contact with, nor whether he had practiced these rituals as well as described them.

Nor can we be sure whether they were regularly practiced in the Thule-Gesellschaft, which he directed. It would, however, be important to know this to evaluate the fact that many leading personalities in National Socialism, beginning with Hitler and Hess, were members or were in contact with it. There is no doubt that Hess was a member, and that he in turn, as it were, 'initiated' Hitler when they were together in jail after the failure of the Munich *Putsch*.

At any rate, it should be emphasised that, more than simply because it had an esoteric side, the Thule-Gesellschaft was attractive because of its appearance as a relatively secret society with the swastika as its emblem, and because it was characterised by a decidedly anti-Semitic and a Germanophilic racism. One should be cautious about supposing that the chosen name of this organisation, Thule, attests a serious and conscious reference to Nordic polar symbolism and an ambition to establish a link to the Hyperborean origins of the Indo-Germanic peoples, because primordial Tradition has counted Thule as the sacred centre or sacred isle situated in the far north. We should mention, on the other hand, the possibility of a rather more

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that it had any significant impact on Nazi ideology or strategy. The definitive work in English on it is Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, The Occult Roots of Nazism (Wellingborough: Aquarian, 1985).

[8] Rudolf von Sebottendorff (1875–1945), an alias of Adam Glauer, a German who moved to Turkey and became a citizen in 1911, and who was adopted by the German aristocrat Baron Heinrich von Sebottendorff, a German aristocrat who was also living as an expatriate there. Rudolf studied Bektashi Sufism there, and then returned to Germany in 1913 to begin spreading his own mystical teachings, which led to the creation of the Thule Society. By 1920 Sebottendorff had returned to Turkey, however, and was never involved with either Thule or the Nazis again. Evola is somewhat mistaken, however, as Theodor Fritsch, not Sebottendorff, was the founder of the Germanenorden, and the Thule Society was not founded until 1918.

[9] Practices of Ancient Turkish Freemasonry (Leipzig: Theosophische Verlagshaus, 1924). English edition: Secret Practices of the Sufi Freemasons: The Islamic Teachings at the Heart of Alchemy (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 2013).

profane origin for it, since Thule can be the deformation of 'Thales', the name of a locality in Harz, where the 'Order of Germans' had organised a convention in 1914, having as its order of business the formation of a secret racist organisation to combat the forces that were supposed to exist behind international Jewry. It was especially this order of ideas that Sebottendorff emphasised in his book, which was published in Munich in 1933, entitled *Bevor Hitler kam*,[10] to point out what myths and ideology had already existed before Hitler.

Therefore, serious research into Hitler's initiatory links to secret societies does not take us very far. As for Hitler as a medium and his magnetic force, some clarifications are necessary. That Hitler owed this force to initiatory practices seems to us pure fantasy. Otherwise, we would be in the absurd position of supposing a similar cause for the equally impressive psychic force possessed by other leaders — by Mussolini, for instance, or Napoleon. Rather, we should believe that, once a collective movement has been awakened to life, a type of psychic vortex is created which concentrates itself in anyone who is its centre so as to confer a special nimbus upon, especially for impressionable people.

As for his being a medium (which, incidentally, possesses the opposite traits of qualification for initiation), it can be acknowledged in Hitler, with certain reservations, insofar as he does appear as possessed in more than one respect. (This trait distinguishes him from Mussolini, for instance.) Precisely when he was arousing crowds into fanaticism, he gave the impression that another power had carried him away, using him exactly like a medium, even if one of a very special and exceptionally gifted type. Anyone who has heard Hitler speak to raving crowds must have had that impression. Given the reservations we have expressed concerning the supposed 'Unknown Superiors', it is not easy to determine the nature of such a super-personal force.

As for National Socialist 'gnosis', or a presumed, almost mystical and metaphysical dimension, it is necessary to remember the singular coexistence in this movement and the Third Reich of 'mythic' aspects with openly Enlightenment and even scientistic aspects. Numerous references can be found in Hitler of a worldview that is markedly 'modern', or else, basically, profane, naturalistic, and materialist, while at the same time he had faith in a Providence of which he believed himself to be an instrument, especially for what he regarded as the fate of the German nation. (For instance, he saw a sign of Providence in his having escaped by the skin of his teeth

[10] Before Hitler Came (Munich: Deukula, 1933). No English edition exists.

from the attempt on his life in his general headquarters.) Although he disregarded the myth of blood, Alfred Rosenberg, the movement's ideologue, talked about a 'mystery' of Nordic blood that had a sacramental value, but this same man, when it came to Catholicism, attacked every rite and sacrament as mystifications and, like an Enlightenment*philosophe*, took sides against the 'obscurantists of our time' and ascribed the invention of modern science to the credit of Aryan man. At the foundation of all this is the explanation that, if their attention wandered to runes, the ancient Nordic and Germanic signs, they were exhumed on a purely emblematic level, almost as happened in Fascism with certain Roman symbols which had no esoteric assumption behind them. The Nazi program to create a superior man betrayed a 'mysticism of biology', again a mainly scientistic orientation. At most it could be a question of a 'superior man' in Nietzsche's sense, but in no way in an initiatory one.

The project of the 'creation of a religious and military racist order of initiates united around a divinised leader' cannot be considered that of official Nazism, as René Alleau suggests in *Hitler et les sociétés secre`tes; enquête sur les sources occultes du Nazism*.[11] Among others, he referred to the Islamic Ismailis[12] as antecedents. It is rather in the context of the SS, which, take note, was established in a second period of the Third Reich and that held a position within it that displayed some motif of a higher plane.

Especially in the intentions of its organiser, Heinrich Himmler, the SS was clearly meant to create an Order that aimed at education according to the Prussian ethic and the ethic of the ancient chivalric orders, especially the Order of Teutonic Knights. For this kind of organisation, Himmler sought a legitimation or chrism, which, however, he could not draw from Catholicism, as did the old Orders, because the Church was openly opposed by the radical current within Nazism. Even without the possibility of any sort of traditional link, Himmler referred to the Nordic and Hyperborean (Thule) legacy and its symbolism. These references were not due to the 'secret societies', of which we have spoken, but instead looked (as Rosenberg had also

[11] Hitler and the Secret Societies: The Occult Origins of Nazism (Paris: Grasset, 1969). No English edition exists.

[12] The Ismailis are a branch of Shi'a Islam who adhere to an esoteric interpretation of the religion. They are perhaps best known for having given rise to the Hashishin, or Assassins, who terrorised their opponents among Sunni Muslims and the Christian Crusaders through targeted assassinations between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.

done) to the research of a Dutchman, Herman Wirth,[13] who studied the Nordic and Atlantic tradition. (Wirth received subventions from an office created for him by Himmler, the Ahnenerbe.)[14] This is not without interest, but there is no sign of 'occult backgrounds'.

So the overall balance is negative. The limit of the French authors' ramblings is established by J M Angebert, *Hitler et la tradition cathare*.[15] At centre stage are the Albigensians (or Cathars),[16] a sect of heretics that was widespread in southern France between the tenth and twelfth centuries, and which had its capitol at the fortress of Monségur. It was destroyed, according to Otto Rahn,[17] in a 'crusade against the Grail', (which is the title of his book, *Kreuzzug gegen den Gral*).[18] It is completely obscure what the Grail has to do with the Templars and this sect, which was characterised by a type of fanatical Manicheism[19] in flight from the word and which was the enemy of earthly existence in flesh and matter, to the degree that its followers let themselves die of hunger or committed suicide by other means. (We corresponded with Rahn and tried to show him the arbitrary nature of his thesis.) It has been suggested that Rahn was in the SS and that a German expedition was sent to discover the mythical object that was supposedly rescued at the time of the destruction of the Cathar fortress at Monségur. The object was supposed to have been guarded during the Third Reich. After the fall of Berlin, a division had opened a path all the way to Zillertal, near the

[13] Herman Wirth (1885–1981) was a Dutch German who believed that there was an ancient, worldwide Nordic culture which has been forgotten apart from some traces which remain encoded in ancient myths and symbols. Like Evola, he was briefly involved with the SS Ahnenerbe in the 1930s.

[14] The Ahnenerbe, or 'ancestral inheritance', was a special branch of the SS established in 1935 to research the history, archaeology, and anthropology of the Germanic and Aryan peoples.

[15] Hitler and the Cathar Tradition (Paris: Laffont, 1971). English edition: The Occult and the Third Reich: The Mystical Origins of Nazism and the Search for the Holy Grail (New York: Macmillan, 1974).

[16] The Cathars believed that the God as represented in the Old and New Testaments were actually different gods, with the God of the New Testament being the God of goodness and of the world of the spirit, whereas the God of the Old Testament was the God of evil who had created the material world.

[17] Otto Rahn (1904–1939) was a German researcher who was fascinated by the mythos of the Holy Grail, and he made many explorations, particularly in southern France, in pursuit of it. He unenthusiastically joined the SS in 1936 as a way to earn a living and support his research. He froze to death in Austria in 1939, and it is still debated whether he committed suicide or was murdered.

[18] Crusade Against the Grail (Freiburg: Urban, 1933). English edition: Crusade Against the Grail: The Struggle Between the Cathars, the Templars, and the Church of Rome (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 2006).

[19] In ancient Persia, the Manichean religion taught that the entire cosmos was locked in combat between forces of absolute good and evil.

Italian border, taking this object with them in order to hide it at the foot of a glacier, in expectation of a new era.

In reality, there was talk of a commando who seems to have had a less mystical mission, saving and hiding the Reich's treasure. Two other examples of where imagination can lead when its reins are loosened and it is carried away by *idees fixes*:[20] the SS (which included not only military units but also scholarly specialists and so forth) organised an expedition to Tibet for mountaineering and ethnological purposes, and another expedition to the Arctic, apparently for exploration and also for the eventual creation of military bases. According to these fantastic interpretations, the first expedition was supposed to have been seeking to establish a link with a secret centre of Tradition, while the second was aiming at contact with the occult, hyperborean Thule.

[20] French: 'obsessive idea'.